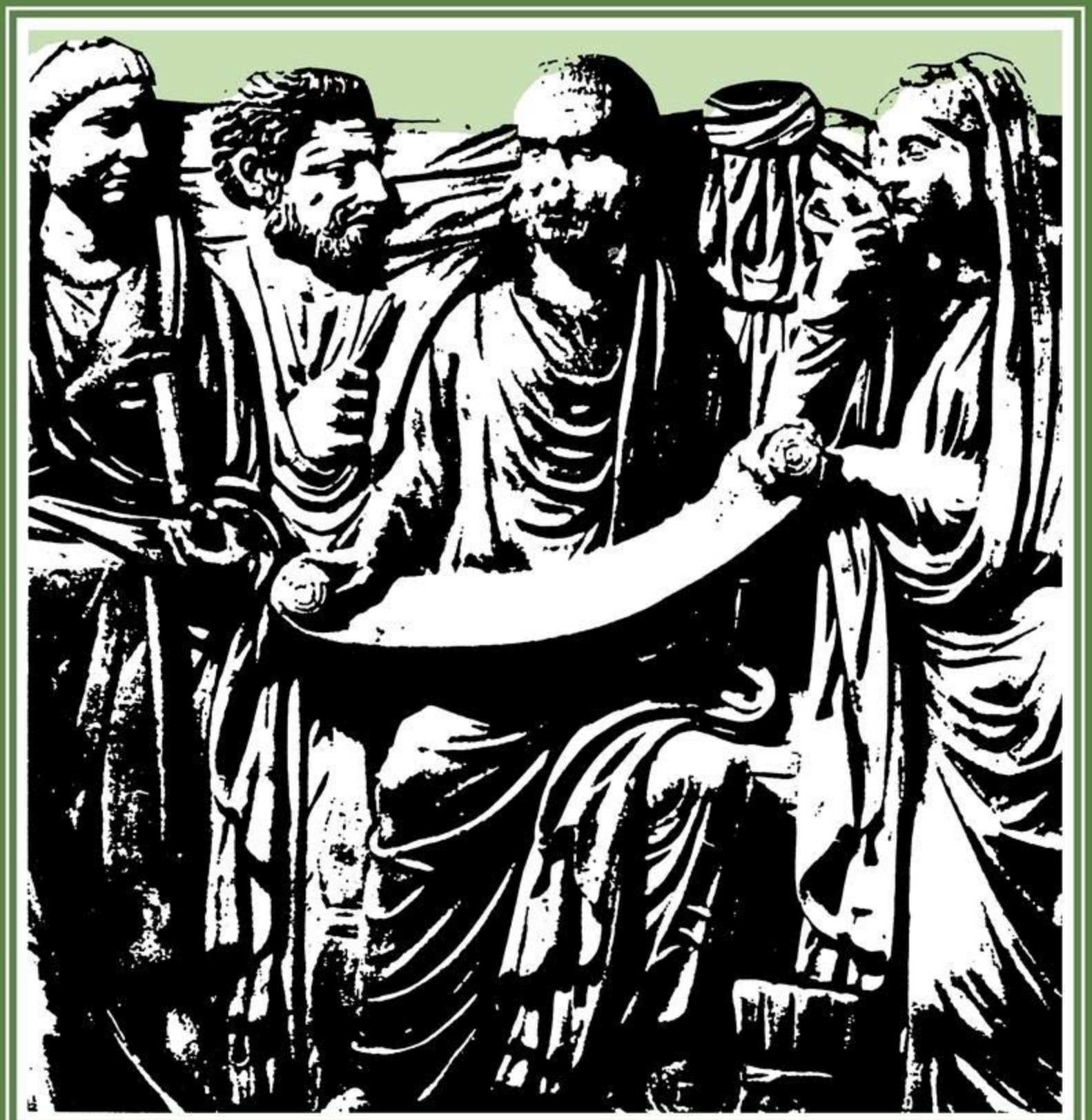
Plotinus

The Road to Reality

JM Rist



PLOTINUS: THE ROAD TO REALITY

To

A. L. PECK *and* F. H. SANDBACH

PLOTINUS:
THE ROAD TO REALITY

BY

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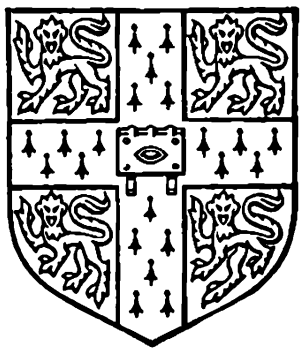

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Toronto
July 1966

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CAG	*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*
CAH	*Cambridge Ancient History*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
DK	Diels–Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*
DR	*Downside Review*
DS	*Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*
EC	*Études Carmélitaines*
GCS	*Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IPQ	*International Philosophical Quarterly*
JHP	*Journal of the History of Philosophy*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
Mnem.	*Mnemosyne*
Mus. Helv.	*Museum Helveticum*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne
PQ	*Philosophical Quarterly*
PR	*Philosophical Review*
R. Néosc. de Phil.	*Revue Néoscolastique de Philosophie*
RE	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
REG	*Revue des Études Grecques*
Rh. Mus.	*Rheinisches Museum*
RSR	*Recherches de Science Religieuse*
RUO	*Revue de l'Université de l'Ottawa*
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*

1

INTRODUCTION

This book is not intended to present an outline sketch of the philosophy of Plotinus; there are readily available a number of works which do that very well. It is intended rather for those who are interested in a more detailed discussion of certain problems in Plotinus' thought which have not always received the attention they deserve at the hands of either classicists or philosophers. In the last chapter I have ventured beyond Plotinus himself into the wider field of Neoplatonism generally, since the subject of faith, which is discussed there, affords an excellent opportunity for seeing Plotinus not only as a philosopher but as an influence on philosophers both Christian and pagan.

There has been a considerable and belated revival of interest in Plotinus' thought in recent years, but, with a few exceptions, the scholars and thinkers engaged in this work have had little impact on the study of ancient philosophy in most parts of the English-speaking world. Within that world Plotinus has fallen into a curious limbo: he is regarded as too late to be studied as a classical author, and too early to fall within the scope of the medievalist, even where the medievalist is bold enough to step outside the narrow confines of the Latin West. It seems, therefore, that there is room for a book on problems in Plotinus' thought. If a general picture of a great philosopher emerges from these pages, so much the better.

2

A LIFE FOR THE SAGE

The life of Plotinus has been recounted many times since it was first set down by Porphyry in the *Vita Plotini* with which in A.D. 301 he prefaced his edition of his master's works. It is worth retelling not merely because it is the custom to open books on the history of philosophy with a brief biography of the particular hero, nor because it is possible to add significant factual details to what has been written already, but in order to show as far as possible the kind of man it was who composed the *Enneads*. For any light which may be shed on their frequent obscurities by a deeper understanding of the character of their author cannot but be of value.

When writing the life of any historical figure, the wise biographer will look as closely as he can at all the available evidence. In the case of Plotinus he will realize that virtually all the evidence we have comes from the work of Porphyry. In two matters at most is there evidence of any other tradition. We shall consider these matters, of course, but in general we must rely on what Porphyry says; and though Porphyry can often be most helpful, he can at times be infuriating. His aim is certainly not to tell us everything he knows about Plotinus, but to select those aspects of his character and career which are most easily fitted into a somewhat hagiographical framework. What is omitted is omitted either through a desire to suppress the unwelcome fact or a misunderstanding of Plotinus' position in society. Needless to say the misunderstandings of Porphyry have led to more elaborate modern misunderstandings.

In almost the first words of the first chapter of the *Life* Porphyry remarks that Plotinus could not be induced to talk of his ancestry, his parents, or his place of birth. He gives us only one piece of information about Plotinus' life up to the age

of twenty-seven, namely that when he was eight years old and being taken to school by his nurse he used to enjoy baring her breasts and taking suck—until he was rebuked and shamed out of the habit.[1] Why Plotinus told this story we are not informed. Those who have suspected that he gave it as an example of an involuntary fault may be correct. Yet whatever the reason and whatever else Porphyry knew of Plotinus' childhood and boyhood, he chooses to say nothing.

Porphyry thinks he knows when Plotinus was born, for he mentions his age at various times of life and at his death. Yet it is clear that he did not derive this information from Plotinus himself. Porphyry was not present at Plotinus' death; the philosopher was attended then only by the doctor Eustochius, and Porphyry observes[2] that it was Eustochius who told him that Plotinus was sixty-six years old when he died at the end of the second year of the reign of Claudius Gothicus (A.D. 270).[3] A natural assumption from this would be that Plotinus broke silence about his birth to his doctor, but Oppermann[4] has disturbingly pointed out that on Eustochius' dating, as Porphyry gives it in the *Life*,[5] Plotinus would have been forty when he came to Rome. And forty, the famous 'acme' of a man's career, is so often an age calculated by the merest guesswork.

We cannot therefore be sure of Plotinus' age at any time, or of his date of birth. The ages of the hero given by Porphyry at different stages of his life are useful markers of his activity, but not necessarily correct. Indeed one might hazard the guess that Plotinus was not as old as Porphyry supposed. Porphyry tells us in chapter three that he was twenty-seven when he became interested in philosophy. That seems rather late. We may wonder what he had been doing before, for the previous ten years or so. But this is merely speculation, part of the difficulty which Plotinus has caused his biographers by being unwilling to speak of himself, or, as Porphyry rather more melodramatically puts it, by his being 'ashamed of being in a body'.[6]

Of the date of birth of the philosopher, of his parents and family, Porphyry says nothing. He says nothing of his place of birth; yet there were strong traditions about that. In his note on the life of Plotinus Eunapius tells us that he came from Egypt;[7] that much is obvious from Porphyry, doubtless Eunapius' source. But Eunapius goes further and, commenting that Porphyry does not mention the fact, adds that his birthplace was Lyco. The version of the *Suda* is Lycopolis, identifiable with Assiut in Upper Egypt.[8] But although Plotinus came from Egypt, he was almost certainly of Greek or at least entirely hellenized stock. His references to the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics indicate no understanding of their nature,[9] despite the contemporary stirrings of native languages against the predominance of Greek. Scholars have sometimes suggested that the name Plotinus may be Roman,[10] sometimes Hellenistic. In truth we do not know.

Let us then picture Plotinus as far as we can in the year 232 when he began to frequent the philosophers of Alexandria. He is of a fairly wealthy and leisured class, for he went to school and could afford the hard-working but financially unrewarding life of a non-Cynic philosopher. His family is unknown, but probably had local significance at least, if not wider links throughout the Empire. He was, we may surmise, a child of the Hellenic or hellenized aristocracy of Egypt.

His activities among the philosophers of Alexandria are in no way unusual.[11] He roamed about from one school to the next until he found what seemed satisfactory. It appears from Porphyry's narrative that none of the better-known instructors came up to the mark, because Plotinus did not think of the man who eventually won his enthusiasm, Ammonius, but received this suggestion from a friend. At any rate Ammonius proved an inspiration and Plotinus remained with him for a period of eleven years.

The internal history of Plotinus during this period is almost as obscure as his childhood. We know virtually nothing of the philosophy of Ammonius, who wrote nothing.[12] His teachings,

or at any rate his major teachings, seem to have been confided only to a small group,[13] to which Plotinus belonged in company with Erennius and a certain Origen. This Origen, author of treatises on *daimones* and on the causality of the first principle, is not to be confused with the Church Father who, however, may also at some time have been Ammonius' pupil. Exactly what these pupils learned from Ammonius we do not know. The only possible clue Porphyry gives us is in an allusion to Ammonius' methods of approach to philosophical topics: it seems that he was markedly less conservative and less of a commentator than the majority of his contemporaries.[14]

Be that as it may, Plotinus' externally uneventful life in Alexandria was completely transformed in 243. According to Porphyry Plotinus had so far advanced in philosophy that he wished to investigate the thought of the East—a perpetual longing of the Greeks—as represented by the Persians and Indians. Mindful perhaps of the train of *savants* who had followed Alexander the Great to India, Plotinus therefore managed to have himself attached to the expedition of the youthful Emperor Gordian III against the Persians. As scholars have observed, this mere fact tells us something about Plotinus' life —as does its sequel. For Gordian was murdered by his soldiers and, Porphyry tells us, Plotinus only narrowly managed to escape to Antioch. His danger was clearly not from the Persians, but from the Roman enemies of the murdered Senatorial Emperor. In fact, as Harder has explained,[15] Plotinus must have owed both his permission to join the expedition and his danger at Gordian's death to connections within senatorial circles at Rome. The Roman Senate at this time was largely cosmopolitan in origin and could have contained friends, conceivably even members, of Plotinus' own family.[16] At any rate Plotinus' background receives further illumination. The connections of his family extended to Rome.

And it was to Rome itself that Plotinus now journeyed. He appears not to have returned to Alexandria; whether because his patrons supposed his life would be in danger there, or be-

cause, Ammonius having died, he felt little incentive to return, we do not know. At first sight Rome might not seem a congenial place for the philosopher, but in some ways it was ideal. Apart from the presumed personal connections Rome had the advantage for Plotinus of not being the home of Ammonius. If Ammonius were still alive at this time, we can imagine that Plotinus would not wish to set up a school, which might be regarded as a rival, in the city of Alexandria. If Ammonius were dead, Plotinus might feel that his ties with Alexandria were gone, especially if one of the reasons for his unwillingness to speak of his parents was that they had perished in factional disturbances after the murder of Gordian III. And if Plotinus left Alexandria he would certainly not find Athens to his taste. Here the official Platonism of the Diadochi, or successors of Plato in the Academy, was taught, much of it of little interest to Plotinus with his unhistorical methods and dislike of traditional ways. Longinus taught Porphyry in Athens before Porphyry came to Rome; of Longinus' works *On Causes* and *Philarchaios* Plotinus remarked that the author was a literary man, a philologist, not a philosopher.

It was then to Rome that Plotinus came in A.D. 244. Here he was the centre of a circle which lasted with various fluctuations of membership and fortune until his death in 270. Some of its members came from the senatorial class: Marcellus Orontius, Sabinillus who shared the consulate with the Emperor Gallienus in 266, Rogatianus who attained the rank of praetor only to decline it for philosophic motives, and possibly the elusive Castricius Firmus who was a close friend both of Porphyry and of Plotinus' other leading disciple Gentilianus Amelius, and to whom is dedicated Porphyry's treatise on vegetarianism, *De Abstinentia*, a protreptic against lapsing into an 'unphilosophical' way of life.[17] The background of Amelius was Etruria, though we do not know anything more of his circumstances there. Unlike most of Plotinus' Roman adherents he had already received philosophical training—with the Stoic Lysimachus.[18] As for the lady Gemina, in whose house

Plotinus lodged, and her daughter of the same name, we know nothing.

Such then is the society, so far as we can see it, into which Plotinus moved when he came to Rome. It is a senatorial society with connections over a large part of the world. It is not, however, a society especially favoured by the Emperor Gallienus, who some have supposed encouraged the Plotinian school as the vanguard of a Hellenic revival. Gallienus' wife may have been Greek; but despite all the admiration Gallienus later came to have for Plotinus personally, his public activities have little connection with the career of the philosopher.[19]

If Plotinus' circle was partially composed of prominent Roman personages, including senators, and if, as Porphyry tells us, Plotinus himself played a significant rôle in Roman society and was in considerable demand as an arbitrator and as the ward of young children—both of which tasks he performed in exemplary fashion[20]—we must not forget that the larger section of his group was always of Oriental origin. First and foremost comes the Tyrian Malchos, or Porphyry as he is better known; from Alexandria come Plotinus' doctor and close confidant Eustochios, a professional speaker named Serapion, who, according to Porphyry, never shook off the vices of avarice and usury,[21] and probably the Arabian Zethos who married a daughter of a friend of Ammonius. Of the others mentioned by Porphyry, Paulinus came from Scythopolis while the critic and poet Zoticus is of unknown origin—although Alexandria might again be a fair guess. The third of the women who, Porphyry tells us, were devoted to philosophy was Amphiclea, wife of Ariston, son of Iamblichus. It has been noticed that the name Iamblichus probably marks a Syrian origin. Furthermore it should be recalled that, when Amelius chose to retire, he moved to the birthplace of his adopted son Hostilianus Hesychius, to Apamea, a city of Syria with some philosophic pretensions whose sons had included Posidonius and Numenius.

We see Plotinus then in the years 244–53 living in Rome, moving in high circles, teaching among his friends, looking after the interests of those who trusted him in matters of importance, but writing nothing. He did not go to the baths, not out of the spirit of excessive asceticism but probably through dislike of the licence they encouraged. Instead he looked after his health by having massage at home.[22] He was not of strong constitution, suffering from various intestinal complaints; he remained a strict vegetarian and would not use medicaments made of animal flesh.

His lectures were open to the public[23] and took the form of the discussion of set texts. As Porphyry tells us,[24] various Platonic or Peripatetic writings would be read, the works of men like Numenius or Alexander of Aphrodisias, and these would form the basis on which Plotinus would give his disquisition. Although at first he was unwilling to use the teachings of his master Ammonius, because of an agreement with his fellow-pupils,[25] he eventually followed their example and based his seminars on them. During the proceedings he encouraged the audience to ask questions, a method which in the view of Amelius led to a good deal of purposeless discussion,[26] and which often annoyed visitors. Porphyry records that on one occasion he himself questioned Plotinus for three days in succession on the relation of the soul with the body, and when a visitor named Thaumasius objected that he wished to hear from Plotinus a set treatise he only received the reply from the master himself that if he could not resolve Porphyry's difficulties he would have no treatise to give.[27]

With the opening of the reign of Gallienus in 263 a change occurred. Plotinus began to write up some of his lectures and discussions.[28] Why he did so we do not know; what we do know is that in the next ten years, before Porphyry joined the school, he put down twenty-one tracts. Under the urging of Porphyry and of Amelius the rate of composition increased so that during the years 263–8 twenty-four more treatises appeared. In 268 Porphyry thought of committing suicide, and

being dissuaded by Plotinus was ordered to take a rest and enjoy the traditional cure prescribed in antiquity for such melancholia, a change of abode. He retired to Lilybaeum in Sicily and was there until after Plotinus' death in 270.[29]

According to Porphyry the treatises composed between 263 and 268 are Plotinus' best,[30] but here Porphyry merely flatters himself. He seems to suppose that Plotinus' best work was done while he himself was with him, but there is little evidence to support his notion that the earlier treatises show an as yet not fully developed talent. As for the nine tracts that Plotinus wrote between the time of Porphyry's departure for Sicily and his own death, they are a special case, and while they show no diminution in Plotinus' philosophical powers, they indicate a particular interest arising from the philosopher's own situation which we shall discuss later.

Let us turn aside however to consider Plotinus at work on his writings. He certainly did not begin to write too young, and it is probably a fair surmise that he shared Plato's suspicion of the written word and feeling that it was no substitute for oral discussion. At any rate, although his lectures were open to the public, his writings were made available only to a small circle of intimates.[31] Porphyry makes it quite clear that although he was allowed to attend the lectures of Plotinus when he first came to Rome he did not gain immediate access to the writings. When Porphyry heard Plotinus' lectures he was moved to write a reply to Plotinus' teachings on the relation of Νοῦς and the Forms, and to propose instead the (genuinely Platonic) theories which he had learned from Longinus. Amelius was instructed by Plotinus to reply on his behalf; Porphyry replied to the reply and Amelius wrote again. At this point Porphyry gave in and wrote a palinode. At that stage only was he admitted into the inner circle and entrusted with Plotinus' writings. Certainly the reason for this was that Plotinus felt that only with such men could written philosophy be safe. To the unskilled it would only breed confusions which it could not answer.

To Plotinus' probable mistrust of writing must be added his physical infirmities. His eyesight was bad and this precluded him,[32] even had he wished, from revising anything he had written. Apparently he did not even re-read his sentences. His handwriting was bad; he joined words together wrongly; he made mistakes in spelling. He regularly spelled ἀναμιμνήσκεται as ἀναμνημίσκεται—in this case an error carried over from the spoken to the written word.[33] Porphyry expresses amazement that these peculiarities continued down to the end of his master's career.

There is a sentence in chapter eight of the *Life* which all editors of Plotinus should face with fear and trembling, but whose implications have often passed unnoticed. Plotinus only concerned himself with the sense (ἀλλὰ μόνον τοῦ νοῦ ἐχόμενος),[34] says Porphyry, and when he wrote he wrote continuously as though he were copying from a book. It would be an exaggeration to say that this implies that Plotinus disregarded the exigencies of grammar and syntax in his desire to put down what he meant, but it would not be unfair or uninformative to observe that there frequently appears in the *Enneads* what can only be described as a 'stream of consciousness' style. By this may be understood not so much a disregard of normal syntax, though that is not uncommon, as a neglect of the pedestrian connections of thought. Even the most learned of the ancients were baffled by this habit if they were not familiar with Plotinus' manner of exposition. In chapters 19 and 20 of the *Life* Porphyry alludes to the fate of various manuscripts of Plotinus which he had sent to his former teacher Longinus, in particular those on the soul and on the Real. They are useless, complains Longinus; they are full of scribal errors. But Porphyry's reply is that if ever there were correct copies of Plotinus' tracts Longinus has them. They were copies, says Porphyry, from Plotinus' own autograph. The reason Longinus is unable to follow them is that he is unfamiliar with the 'customary method of exposition' (τὴν συνήθη ἑρμηνείαν) which Plotinus employs. What a warning, though a

frequently neglected one, to the contemporary editor! As Porphyry remarks elsewhere,[35] in his lectures Plotinus spoke in a conversational manner. He did not always bring out clearly the logical connections of his propositions (τὰς συλλογιστικὰς ἀνάγκας). The same might be said of his written style, though it is mere laziness to decide on that ground that the logical connections are non-existent.

Such then was his manner of writing; his manner of lecturing had a good many similar characteristics. We have observed some of them already: the reading of commentaries, the habit of breaking off the discussion to answer sometimes extended periods of questioning. We should now observe others, and most marked of all, perhaps, the combination of earnestness and gentleness which clearly so impressed Porphyry.[36] He was a good man, remarks Porphyry, agreeing in this with the oracle of Apollo, and a gentle and very kindly one. His manner always charmed those around him, and when he spoke his face glowed with intelligence and kindliness,[37] the latter a mark also of his private life, as we have seen, where his services were so much in demand as mediator and as the guardian of orphans. There is no doubt that the intensity of manner to which Porphyry alludes when speaking of his teaching was due to his confidence in the value of what he had to teach. There was no pompous self-advertisement about him,[38] and on one occasion when Origen, his former fellow-scholar in Alexandria, entered the lecture hall, his enthusiasm to carry on speaking noticeably declined. Plotinus was embarrassed, says Porphyry, and was about to bring his lecture to an end. The teacher's earnestness (προθυμία) declines, he said, if he sees that the audience has nothing to learn from him.

Of Plotinus' relations with contemporary philosophers we know a little. Porphyry mentions a number of these philosophers in the *Life*, though he does not seem to think very highly of them, except for the Platonists Longinus, Ammonius (presumably not the teacher of Plotinus) and Origen under whom

he himself had studied. He mentions the official representatives of Platonism at Athens, the successive heads of the Academy, on two occasions.[39] One is a mere reference; the other is more significant. When Eubulus, the head of the Academy, sent various treatises to Plotinus, Plotinus did not examine them himself but asked Porphyry to read them and give him a report. This is in keeping with his usual practice,[40] but certainly indicates that he accorded no special respect to the official leaders of the Platonic tradition—which is not surprising in view of his own original and untraditional methods of enquiry. And other philosophers of the day received little more attention. It is significant that Plotinus never mentions the name of a contemporary or near-contemporary in his writings.

Yet whatever his views of his contemporaries and however liberally he may have treated his master Plato's own teachings,[41] his respect for the Platonic manner of life shows itself perhaps not only in what we should call his pure philosophizing but also in his wider scientific interests. Porphyry admits that his interest in astronomy (τοῖς περὶ τῶν ἀστέρων κανόσιν) was not very mathematical,[42] and an astrological bias may be detected here—for Plotinus certainly went to some trouble to investigate the validity of horoscopes, only to be convinced of their worthlessness—but others of the Platonic sciences he seems to have learned almost against his inclination and presumably because he regarded this, in Platonic fashion, as a proper training of the mind. As Porphyry puts it, 'nothing of geometry, arithmetic, mechanics, optics or music escaped his notice'. It was no mere ritual that the school of Plotinus celebrated the birthdays of Socrates and Plato, that Plotinus himself offered sacrifices on those days and that each member of the school was then expected to give a lecture.[43] Porphyry recalls how on one such occasion he read a paper called 'The Sacred Marriage'.[44]

And probably it was the example and colossal psychological impact of Plato which provided the motive for the extra-

ordinary scheme to found a city to be called Platonopolis.[45] It is clear now that after all the speculation on this topic there is little fresh that can be said. Porphyry's allusions to the matter are of the briefest. The Emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina were among Plotinus' admirers and on one occasion —we do not know when—Plotinus thought this friendship might be turned to account. There was a ruined city in Campania, said at one time to have been a city of philosophers,[46] which Plotinus proposed to rebuild and settle. He would then retire there with his school and the city would be governed according to Plato's laws. It was mere jealousy and caballing at court, says Porphyry, which prevented this scheme from being carried out.

Much has been made of this project by scholars—only too eager to fill out the gaps in our scanty knowledge. We have alluded already to the views of those like Alföldi who see in Platonopolis a part of the Imperial plan to revive Hellenism in the Roman Empire on the basis of a new (and anti-Christian?) philosophy, and who think of Gallienus as an earlier avatar of Julian. Two points, however, are against this. First of all the scheme did not originate with Gallienus himself, but with Plotinus. Secondly Gallienus and Plotinus did not apparently have anything like a common scheme for the revival of Hellenism.[47] As we have observed already, it was not Gallienus who introduced Plotinus to Roman society; it was a group from the Senate. And the Senate and Gallienus were by no means of similar mind. There is no evidence to suggest that Gallienus ever showed the slightest enthusiasm for the Platonopolis venture. It appears to have been an idea of Plotinus' own, arising no doubt out of his devotion to the Platonic ideal. Why did Gallienus throw it out? Not through the envious machinations of courtiers, as Porphyry suggests, but because of the problem of settlers, as I have suggested elsewhere. It would have been hard to find veterans of the Roman army willing to live under Plato's laws and, despite the fact that Porphyry uses the word ἀναχωρεῖν ('retire')[48] when speaking of Plotinus' projected

move to Platonopolis, it was a city he was going to found, not a monastery. Ancient cities needed citizens, the governed, who would be veterans and their families, and governors, in this case applying Plato's laws, who would be Plotinus and his friends. Perhaps the scheme was not so impractical as it sounds, for among these friends might be included the various senatorial adherents of philosophy, but the chances of failure were clearly enormous.

Yet we must return to Plotinus' attitude to contemporary philosophers or quasi-philosophers. Philosophy by the third century A.D. could all too easily slide downhill into a vulgar miracle-mongering and pseudo-mysticism, combined in the moral sphere with extreme antinomianism. Certain minds which might be directed to Plotinus' school could easily lose themselves in the maze of theurgical, astrological or magical paraphernalia which could be mistaken for the genuinely mystical article. Gnosticism, the Siren of contemporary thinkers, occupied a kind of no man's land between philosophy and theology, and, posing as both, stole the adherents of both. Porphyry tells us in the *Life* that Plotinus frequently attacked Gnosticism in its 'Christian' form and that his disciples, including himself, attacked it in other forms.[49] Yet the movement might attract the genuine philosophical enquirer, and Plotinus' predecessor Numenius, a great influence on Plotinus himself, was not free of its attitudes. Plotinus says himself that he restrains his attacks on Gnosticism—though they are certainly severe and fundamental enough—because some of his pupils had formerly belonged to the movement and, to his amazement, still profess some of its doctrines. The movement itself he thinks of as pernicious: it is dogmatic, fanciful and full of insult for the great thinkers of the past, including Plato;[50] but, perhaps in accordance with the principle of 'love the sinner and hate the sin', he speaks in a kindly manner to the waverers, urging them to a firmer allegiance to the truth.

The ideas of the rhetorician Diophanes may have been not unconnected with Gnosticism,[51] for in the moral sphere

Gnosticism frequently led to antinomianism. His view, expounded in a set speech at Plotinus' school, that for the sake of advancement in virtue the pupil should allow his master to have intercourse with him—a view delivered in the form of a justification of the behaviour of the Alcibiades of Plato's *Symposium*—aroused Plotinus to anger. Plotinus in fact had to restrain his impulse to leave the room during this performance, and at its close followed his normal practice of instructing a disciple, in this case Porphyry, to write a refutation. In this story we see a side of Plotinus' character which is not often apparent in Porphyry's account, a righteous indignation at immoral suggestion. The matter of philosophical paederasty will have been a touchy point; there was a strong tradition of it from classical times. Its prevalence is borne out by countless bawdy stories that have come down to us and by the denunciations both of satirists like Juvenal and moralists like Plutarch, who equally regard the practice as a hypocritical and rationalized variety of lust. It would not, of course, do for any suspicion of such activities to hover round Plotinus' school at Rome where condemnation of 'Greek vice' was particularly strong.

We have now noticed many aspects of Plotinus' character: his friendliness, his helpfulness, his patience, his moderate asceticism, his strict sense of morality. We should perhaps add his urge to retire, his probable dislike of being such a public figure, or indeed a 'famous personality' of any kind, as is shown by the curious story told by Porphyry of his unwillingness to have his portrait painted. He defended this objection on the Platonic ground that it would be futile to leave to posterity the mere image of an image.[52]

Yet there is another side to his character which cannot be passed over, namely the almost uncanny power of his personality.[53] Here we are on very difficult ground. Matter of this kind is grist to the hagiographer's mill and there is some evidence of school-gossip building up quasi-divine powers around the philosopher. This is not uncommon; it had happened to Socrates. The master of Plato must unquestionably have been

a commanding personality; kindly, unaccountably wise and somehow rather awe-inspiring. He had, as he said, a voice which spoke to him, something divine. He said little about this voice; but the peculiar magnetism of his character and the seemingly superhuman implications of his 'divine sign' caused the 'voice' to be built up into something greater than Socrates himself had ever imagined.[54] Perhaps this process is inevitable; at any rate it makes the task of understanding the character of Socrates extraordinarily difficult.

There is no doubt that Plotinus' utterances were often obscure; any page of the *Enneads* must make that clear. What is curious in Porphyry's allusions to the obscurity and strangeness of Plotinus' manner is that his pupils, instead of attempting to elucidate his thought, preferred to marvel at the oracular nature of the saying and do nothing about it. Amelius was given to religiosity: he made a habit of attending ceremonies on holy days and on one occasion invited Plotinus to go with him.[55] Plotinus refused to do so. Let those Beings come to me, not me to them, was his reply. This is obscure enough,[56] but Porphyry then tells us not that Amelius enquired further but that 'we could not understand what was in his mind when he made such a lofty utterance, nor did we dare to ask him'. It is clear that these oracular utterances were prized by the pupils. Porphyry tells us that on one of the feasts in honour of Plato he read a poem called 'The Sacred Marriage', full of mystic enthusiasm and imagery.[57] The audience were certainly taken aback and a heckler remarked that Porphyry had gone mad. Then to the unconcealed satisfaction of the lecturer Plotinus observed loudly: 'You have shown yourself at the same time poet, philosopher and hierophant.'

The oracular sound of this may be rather the imaginings of the devoted pupil than the intention of Plotinus himself. Yet Porphyry clearly associates it with the superhuman powers of his master. He speaks of these powers in the extraordinary tenth chapter of the *Life* where he discusses Plotinus' voluntary and involuntary incursions into the realm of magic.[58] The

involuntary incursion was nothing less than a magical attack on Plotinus by a so-called philosopher from Alexandria named Olympius, who had for a brief time himself been a pupil of Ammonius Saccas and was bitterly envious of Plotinus' reputation. The attack involved the use of what we should call black magic. In Porphyry's account the methods employed involved some kind of star-spells, but we know no more than that about the details. Plotinus apparently felt the attack, but, in Porphyry's version, repelled it, with the result that Olympius felt it more than he did—indeed to such an extent that realizing his life to be in danger he gave up his attempts. What underlies this is hard to determine. Harder compares Plotinus with Prospero and speaks of an 'Abwehr von Schaden und Unrecht'.[59] Porphyry does not make clear whether he, or Olympius, supposed that Plotinus had *deliberately* turned the spells back on their source. What Olympius is said to have told his friends was that Plotinus' soul was so strong as to throw magical assaults back on their originators. The whole affair is obscure and Plotinus' attitude cannot be determined through the smoke.[60]

The second of the incursions into the supernatural to which Porphyry introduces us is easier to follow. Plotinus was invited by an Egyptian priest to take part in a séance to be held in the temple of Isis, said to be the only pure place in Rome, at which his guardian spirit was to be invoked. This occurred before Porphyry's arrival in Rome and is recounted by Porphyry at least partially as an explanation, presumably the explanation current in the school, of why Plotinus wrote an essay on guardian spirits. The purpose of the séance was to invoke Plotinus' guardian spirit—and, to the amazement of those present, this turned out to be not a *daimon* but a god. But something went wrong and the priest's assistant, who was holding the chickens which were to play some obscure part in the ceremony, either through jealousy or terror, as Porphyry puts it, strangled them, thus bringing the whole performance to an end. Whatever Plotinus thought of this is not recorded. It

seems however that he did not involve himself in such activities again, presumably thinking them either of no philosophical importance or more generally things which should be left alone. But the whole affair certainly promoted the growth of wonder at his peculiar relation to the supernatural and perhaps at what we should think of as his unusual psychological powers.

Before leaving this subject we must speak of what can only be called Plotinus' clairvoyance.[61] Porphyry gives three instances of what he describes as a tremendous understanding of character. Two of these might be regarded as examples of clairvoyance or of something like it; the third, and most significant, is merely further evidence of his concern and attentiveness for others. One of the ladies who lodged with Plotinus in the home of Gemina was named Chione. On one occasion a valuable necklace of hers was stolen. Plotinus, according to Porphyry, identified the thief, who then restored the necklace. The second incident is somewhat similar. When asked to forecast the career of the children in the household he did so correctly. Polemon, he forecast, would be amorous and short-lived. What this tells us about Plotinus' character depends, it must be supposed, upon our estimate of the possibility of such powers.

After Porphyry had been at the school for five years he suffered his fit of melancholia and determined on suicide. He kept away from his fellows and shut himself up in his house. There Plotinus sought him out, convinced him that his decision was the result not of rational purpose but of mere depression and sent him off to Sicily. As a result, says Porphyry, I was prevented from being with Plotinus at the time of his death.

The time of the departure of Porphyry was critical for Plotinus himself. He had always had trouble with his health, though, as Porphyry tells us explicitly, he gave no sign of any serious illness at the time of his pupil's departure.[62] Shortly after that there was a serious epidemic in the city of Rome and among its victims were Plotinus' *masseurs*. It was about this

time that Amelius left Rome also, travelling to Apamea in Syria, perhaps partly to avoid infection, though there must have been other reasons for a journey of such length. With Porphyry and Amelius away and many of the other members of the circle absent or dead, Plotinus stayed on in Rome in increasing isolation. Shortly after this he himself contracted the disease, or at any rate showed obvious signs of the disease, from which he ultimately died. He had ulcers on his hands and feet, his sight grew weaker and he became hoarse. Accounts of the illness are extant, derived from the doctor Eustochius who tended the sick philosopher, in both Porphyry's *Life* and in the *Mathesis* of Firmicus Maternus.[63] They do not enable us to be certain of the nature of the illness, though Oppermann's view that it was a form of leprosy (*elephantiasis graeca*) seems to the layman preferable to that of Dr Gillet who diagnoses pulmonary tuberculosis.[64] At any rate the illness was such that it became necessary for his friends to leave his society. Porphyry mentions that for fear of contagion they shrank from receiving his customary kiss of greeting. Plotinus, attended by the faithful Eustochius, retired to Campania, not to any Platonopolis, but to the estate of a deceased member of the circle named Zethos. Zethos' property and that of Castricius Firmus at Minturnae provided the philosopher with his daily needs. It was a solitary life he lived now, but he had always been a man who valued solitude. 'The alone to the Alone' was not a cliché but a summation of his knowledge that ultimately there is no substitute for facing oneself and no avoidance of it. His writings in his last days, whether from Rome or from Campania, are, as has often been observed, primarily concerned with moral problems. In his circumstances this was inevitable. Though sent to Porphyry in Sicily—who fondly imagined the old man's powers were failing—they were written, as Pierre Hadot says, for Plotinus himself.[65]

Plotinus died in A.D. 270. Eustochius, who was living at Pozzuoli, was called to the philosopher's deathbed and arrived in time to hear his last words. Alas for posterity they involve a

problem of reading! It still seems impossible to be sure whether they were 'I'm trying to bring back the divine in myself to the divine in the universe', or 'Give back the divine in yourself to the divine in the universe'. Perhaps the obscurity is irrelevant and appropriate. As Plotinus died, says Porphyry, a snake crept under his bed and disappeared into a hole in the wall.

Some time after Plotinus' death Amelius consulted the oracle of Apollo as to the whereabouts of his master's soul. The God replied in characteristically turgid hexameters which Porphyry has recorded and modern scholars have dutifully abused. Yet for all that, the verses tell us something of the truth about Plotinus and his world. The third century A.D. could not have been, even in Rome, a happy age. The world was in continuous tumult as emperors rose only to be butchered by their half-civilized soldiery. Hellenism was changing beyond all recognition and thinking men began to fear the end of the world. It was a 'blood-drenched' life, as Apollo called it,[66] and Plotinus strove and succeeded in rising above it. The God of Socrates could still speak the truth after all.

3

THE PLOTINIAN ONE

Perhaps no philosopher has been accorded more respect and less understanding than Plotinus. The reasons for this are manifold: the desire to over-emphasize the originality of other thinkers by playing down Plotinus' achievement; the misunderstandings engendered by a too literal-minded interpretation of key phrases; a false theory of the 'atmosphere' of ancient philosophy, particularly of Platonism; and the simple fact that Plotinus' Greek is at times almost untranslatable in our present state of knowledge. A number of important questions about the One have failed to find an answer for one or other of these reasons. Such questions are: Does the One exist, and if so, how? Is the One infinite? This chapter is intended not only to answer some of these questions, but to indicate why they have often proved recalcitrant in the past.

It is certain that the answer one receives to any question will be influenced by the way in which that question is framed. Of the Plotinian One the question might be asked: Is it Being or non-Being? And some of those who understand this sort of question will reply Non-Being. The further question will follow: Is the Plotinian One in fact then non-existent? And again the answer will be Yes. Plotinus will then be condemned as blind to existence and a prisoner of his own concepts. That would be a mistake, but it is easy to see how such a mistake can arise. It can arise from a confusion of Aristotelian form with Platonic. Let us therefore examine the question along these lines.

In the thought of Plato one of the fundamental axioms is that for something to be it must be eternal. Things which 'are' in the world of generation and destruction are often said to be *becoming*, but not *being*. This does not mean that they do not exist, but that they are not fully Beings, because Being must be

eternal. Yet particulars do *exist*, and, even more important, Forms also exist. Being (τὸ ὄν) is not identical with existence, but Beings, that is Forms, most certainly exist. When Plato talks about a Form of Justice, he does not mean a concept of Justice, nor does he regard Justice as a universal which can only exist in the mind of a thinker,[1] nor does he mean the essence of Justice; he means Justice and nothing else, Justice regarded as an actually existent thing.[2] It is no accident that the Form of Beauty is described as αὐτὸ ὅ ἐστι καλόν. The Forms do not partake of Existence or Being.[3] They are described each one as ἕκαστον τὸ ὄν.[4] Each one is the same as itself,[5] a perfect example for the particulars which partake of it. As Gilson says,[6] 'To be, for any given thing—I should say "for any given Form"—is first of all to be that which it is'. Each Form therefore is itself, but it is itself as an actually existent self. Platonism is not, as Gilson supposes,[7] indifferent to actual existence. Rather it sees nothing else and attempts to describe what it sees. The Forms are the only permanent existents because they are not liable to change and destruction.

Since the Forms alone are permanent, they are, as one might expect, causal. This is made clearest of all in the *Phaedo* where it is said to be through the Form—the existent Form—Beauty, that beautiful particulars come to be beautiful.[8] The word 'cause' is specifically used in this context—much to the annoyance of Aristotle.[9] The Platonic Forms are not universals; they are real existent finite 'bits' of Being. And here then is a new point. Beauty is nothing but Beauty; it is Beauty itself, as Gilson says, for Plato had learned from the Pythagoreans that the limited and Limit are good, and that the unlimited is bad. And if the Form is to be exactly what it is, that is, to be selfhood, it must be limited to its own self; it must be defined, and it must be finite. Indeed this must lie behind the assertion of the *Phaedo* to which we have referred, that it is uniform (μονοειδές).

But unless we are to be satisfied with making statements

like Justice is just, Beauty is beautiful, we are liable to find that the 'selfhood' of the Forms inhibits our knowledge of them. For as soon as we try to make statements about the Forms, we find ourselves attributing aspects to their Being which are not precisely their selfhood. We may say that Justice is good, for example, or that Courage is holy. If we are to be able to say anything about a Form, therefore, other than that it is a self-predicating standard, we will find that it is not simply a one, but a one and many. Now since each Form is exactly what it is, it would seem to be the same as itself, that is, in Plato's language, to have no otherness in itself; yet since it is in terms of the intelligible world in some sense a multiplicity, it cannot be entirely a unity. Hence we arrive at the conclusion that the Forms, which are single finite Beings, must in some way be distinct from unity. Hence finite Being must in some way be distinct from unity.

We do not know how far Plato pushed this line of enquiry. We know that at *Republic* 509B he proposes that the Good is 'beyond Being' (οὐσία), which should mean 'beyond finite Being', but there is in fact no evidence that Plato took this further step. To do so would have been to abandon the traditional association of Goodness with Limit. The Good beyond finite Beings may for Plato have been limited by itself, in the sense of being a limit beyond other limits. It is in such a realm that we are bidden seek for it in the latter part of the *Philebus* where the notions of measure and proportion seem to afford the best key to its nature.[10]

There is no need here to argue the fact that Plato came to think of his first principle as the One rather than the Good,[11] though both names were doubtless always current. The Good is the One and the Forms are 'ones'—henads and monads as Plato calls them in the *Philebus* (15AB). And to this One were transferred the difficulties of the Good. The One too is beyond the Forms in some sense. Again we should expect to find some kind of notion of infinity; again we find apparently nothing of the sort. Indeed the very name 'One' indicates the

Platonic emphasis. What is the One but another attempt to find something which is exactly what it is? And Plato does not see that by regarding the One as a limit of limits, he is liable to cause the same difficulties in the case of the One as arose in the case of Form, that is the difficulties of the One and the Many. It is hard to see how Plato's One, if it is finite (as it must be), can escape from the problems of the Beings, the Forms. Plato knew how to separate Unity from finite Being; the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* shows that. What he could not do was to postulate an *infinite* Being. The 'beyond Being' of Plato must mean a finite Being in some way beyond other finite Beings! No wonder it all sounded so paradoxical to the ancients!

Plotinus lived five centuries after Plato in a very different world. Yet he professes to follow Platonic teachings. We might say that as Plato is to Socrates, Plotinus is to Plato. He is the man who understands the Master's intentions even better than the Master himself. He is a systematic thinker whose main interest is the Absolute or One, which he equates with the Platonic Good. He is therefore in a sense the heir of Plato's difficulties, and his solutions are of the utmost importance. We should expect to find within the Plotinian system a radical disjunction between the One and the others, and at the same time, since, as we shall see, everything, even matter, derives from the One, an examination of the ontological relations between the One and the others.

We have remarked that Being, which for Plato is at times at least less than the Good or One, must be understood as finite Being. That this is the general classical view is stated by a number of modern commentators, not all of whom are prepared, however, to see what it implies for Plato and Plotinus. Fr Sweeney,[12] for example, rightly quotes with approval the remark of Fr Owens that 'Perfect Being for the Greeks meant limitation and finitude', without at the same time admitting that to place the One beyond Being means for Plotinus simply to place it beyond finitude, to make it intrinsically infinite.

Similarly Gilson regards the One beyond Being as a non-existent One.[13] For these interpreters questions about the finitude of *Being* in the classical sense of the word do not arise. But here we may be merely playing with words. The question before us is not whether Plotinus said that the One is 'beyond Being', but what he meant by saying this. And in view of the general Greek use of 'Being' to mean 'finite Being', the *prima facie* meaning of the phrase 'beyond Being' should be 'infinite Being'.

Within recent years there has been a long and learned discussion on the infinity of the Plotinian One, and from it we can learn much. The chief participants are now in basic agreement that the One is infinite in itself as well as infinite in power.[14] What I shall have to say here will be by way of assimilating this understanding of the One's infinity to our general grasp of Plotinus' conception of the real.

Let us look at a few of the ways in which the One transcends the finite Beings, namely the Forms. It is beyond what is best (1.8.2.8); it is creative of being and of self-sufficiency—the close association of these two should be noticed as reinforcing the notion that the Forms are essentially finite (5.3.17.12); it is without form (ἀνείδεον, 5.5.6.4) or a shapeless form (ἄμορφον εἶδος, 6.7.33.4); it is again ἀνείδεον in 6.7.32. And there is more than this, for strictly speaking it is indescribable (ἄρρητον τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, 5.3.13.1); no name can be appropriate to it (5.5.6.12). It is simply 'the not this' (5.5.6.13). In what way could Plotinus say better that it is not finite? He could hardly use such language as this if it were only a finitude higher than that of the Intelligible World.

Then why does Plotinus generally call it 'the One'? Surely because it is exactly what it is, an entirely indivisible unity. All his problems about the One's knowledge flow from this fact. Plotinus fears (6.7.37) that to admit that the One has knowledge even of itself is to allow us to see it not as simply itself but as a duality. We know that it has some kind of knowledge but that this knowledge must be of an entirely unique

kind, incomprehensible to us. Its whole nature is beyond our knowledge, but since we must give it a name of some kind, 'the One' will be the most appropriate so long as we do not make the mistake of associating it with the unity of any (finite) Being (6.9.5.38ff.).

The One must be the cause of all finite Beings; it is through the One that such Beings exist. These Beings are not merely more finite examples of unity; they are different in kind from the One, since the One is actually their creator. This point should be stressed, for it is only in the light of the One's infinity that its rôle as creator of all else can properly be grasped, and the enormous difference between Plotinus and Plato be seen. According to the *Timaeus*, the physical world is built upon an eternal, quasi-material substrate. Matter is not made by the Forms; it is only given definite shape by the Forms. Nor is it the creation of the Demiourgos, whose task it is to organize the 'material' before him. In the world of Plotinus, however, things are quite different. The One is the actual maker of Beings, that is of the Forms, as we have seen in 5.3.17.9ff. And not only of the Forms, for Plotinus tells us clearly there that the One is the maker of everything. In 3.8.10 we find among other descriptions of the One the statement that it is like a spring which not only never runs dry but always remains exactly as it was despite the stream of water that eternally flows from it. But the creation-motif is seen at its strongest in 6.8.19. This most important chapter includes the suggestion (l. 13) that the phrase 'beyond Being' was spoken in riddling manner by the ancients, a clear indication that Plotinus regards himself as going at least beyond the letter of the *Republic*, for surely Plato must be the chief thinker meant. To this is added the doctrine that when the One had 'made' Being—we should notice the word 'made' (ἐποίησε) again, for it occurs four times here—he left it 'outside' himself, that is, he remained wholly transcendent.[15] What is more, as Plotinus specifically says in the last sentence of the chapter, this making is not merely 'in accordance with his being', that is, it is not

merely a necessary thing. This is perhaps the strongest expression used anywhere in the *Enneads* to deter the reader from supposing there is any necessary production of the hypostases. The action seems to be wholly mysterious, as is fitting if the One is truly infinite.

Yet the idea that the One is the creator of all, either in a temporal or an extra-temporal sense, occurs again at 4.8.6.18. Either matter has always existed, says Plotinus, or its coming to be is a necessary effect of the existents, that is, the Forms, that are already there. Even if the latter explanation is true (and this is surely not Plotinus' own opinion) then not even so (οὐδ' ὡς) is matter to be thought of as apart from the procession from the One, apart from being a product of the One. The use of the phrase 'not even so' shows us that whether matter be regarded as temporal or not, it is still not to be thought of as separate.[16]

There is good reason for emphasizing the fact that for Plotinus everything is in some sense a product of the One, for we can learn from it that the One and the others are radically opposed, as far apart as creator and creatures must be. Hence although the One is always present to those who look for it (6.9.7 and 8), its complete transcendence and its independence of its products must be continually re-emphasized.[17] This is how we may explain a favourite metaphor of Plotinus', the metaphor by which he calls Being, that is, finite Being, a trace of the One. *Ennead* 6.7.17 presents this idea in association with other themes we have already noticed. In line 10 we learn that the One is beyond act, the act of the Forms, that is, and therefore beyond life. Life is a trace of the One (l. 13); and in line 40 the Intelligible World itself, Mind and its powers, is a trace of the One. And Mind is Form. The trace, we may say, is specific. Hence the One cannot be a Form, a finite Being. Rather it is shapeless and formless. It is the *maker* of Form (εἰδοποιεῖ). Just as a man walking on the beach will leave his footprint behind him, so the presence of the One will leave a finite trace which is the Intelligible World.

This idea of a trace occurs again in *Ennead* 5.5.5—that famous chapter where the words for Being and Existence (ὄν, εἶναι, οὐσία) are said to be derived etymologically from the word for One (ἕν). In the world of Forms, says Plotinus, the trace of the One has established (finite) Being, so that existence is a trace of the One. This trace is represented by the fact that the words for Being and Existence look etymologically similar to, and thus can be thought of as bearing the mark of, the One. For it is because the One imposes a unity, a finite and defined nature, that the Forms can be said to exist at all (6.9.1.1).

The Forms are a trace of the One, but just as a trace is essentially different—despite the sympathetic magicians—from him who made the trace, so the One is essentially different from the Forms. The Forms are finite Being; they could not exist if they were not finite. The One, on the other hand, is superior to them precisely at this point. The phrase 'beyond Being' does not mean, says Plotinus (5.5.6.11 ff.), that the One is some 'this' (for it makes no positive statement about it), nor is it its name; it only implies that the One is not a 'this' or 'that'. As Clarke says,[18] 'To allow that Plotinus' negative dialectic merely excludes form and limit extrinsically from the One while still allowing them intrinsically...is quite simply to rob the whole negative theology of all point and efficacy'. In reply to this Sweeney claimed that 'the One's unique reality and entity...could also involve and *be* (his italics) limit and perfection of its own unique sort; hence infinity of nonbeing need not signify that the One's unique reality itself is infinite'.[19] But this will not do, for if, after all, the One's perfection is limited, even in a unique way, all we could say is either that he is limited by being unlimited, or infinite, that is, that he is his own limit, or that he is limited by something else. Both alternatives are in fact ruled out by Plotinus himself in 5.5.11.2–3, where we read that the One 'is limited neither in relation to others, nor in relation to himself'. Given this clear text, there is no alternative but to say

that he is simply infinite.[20] Like his power, he is infinite to the core (6.5.12.5).

The One then is no particular finite Being. It is, as Plotinus frequently says, 'other than Being'. Since it is not finite Being, can it be reasonably said that it is 'not-Being beyond Being', as Porphyry puts it (*Sententiae*, ch. 26), or even 'Nothing', the term ventured later by Scotus Erigena? We can doubtless trace the historical sequence which led to Erigena's suggestion, and Plotinus would have accepted it if it meant 'no particular finite thing', but he would probably have preferred the phrase of Porphyry—though to the best of my knowledge he does not use it himself—because it is nearer to what he regarded as a primary authority for his position, namely Plato's *Sophist*. We recall in that dialogue that the Eleatic Stranger finds it necessary to re-examine the dictum of his spiritual father Parmenides that 'not-being does not exist'. The Eleatic Stranger wishes to translate the phrase 'not-Being' into 'other than Being', and thus, in the context of the dialogue, to support the intelligibility of negative propositions. But the view that not-Being (τὸ μὴ ὄν) should be thought of as 'other' than particular Being (θάτερον τοῦ ὄντος) is one which Plotinus was very ready to seize upon as an explanation of the relationship of the One 'beyond Being' to the finite existent Beings, the Forms. Porphyry's description of the One as a 'not-Being beyond Being' therefore could be—though it need not be—another version of Plotinus' frequent distinction by otherness of the One from the Forms, the One-and-Many, though by a variation of genius Plotinus holds that all otherness is in the others, none in the One. In this opinion he is presumably drawing on the *Timaeus* (35A), where the World-Soul, but not its maker, has otherness in its composition.

Be that as it may, however, we may briefly look at Plotinus' own usage. In 5.1.6.53 separation from the One is only by otherness, that is, in the language of the *Sophist*, the One is not-Being through being other than Being. Yet, as we have said, and as Plotinus specifically says in 6.9.8.31 ff., although

it is by otherness and difference (ἑτερότης, διαφορά) that the others are separate from the One, there is no otherness (ἑτερότης) in the One itself. This is a splendid variant on Plato's idea. Plato says that not-Being is to be explained as 'otherness'; Plotinus uses the distinction to separate the One which is beyond Being from Beings, but instead of calling the One the 'wholly other' or even 'not-Being beyond Being', as Porphyry does, he emphasizes that it is in a sense the Beings which are not-Being—we should understand of course 'not-infinite-Being'—because they are other than the One. In *Ennead* 2.4.5.28ff. the 'raw material' of the intelligible world, that is, Intelligible Matter, is in fact actually spoken of as being itself otherness.

So far we have asserted that the One is infinite Being and that the Forms, which are other than it, are finite. By infinite Being we have meant infinity in all respects: the One is infinite in itself and infinite in its power. We must now investigate how it is that the Forms, though essentially finite, each one being what it is, its own self, have a certain kind of infinity too.[21] When we were speaking of Plato we touched briefly on the difficulty that although his Forms are intended to be 'just themselves' (μονοειδές) yet there is a sense in which they are multiple. This, we remarked, may have had something to do with the fact that Plato came to feel in some way that he needed a superior principle, which he called the Good and the One, which might reign in pure undivided unity. In Plato this highest principle is left in comparative obscurity. It is a mystery which can be alluded to but not spoken of. For Plotinus, however, although the One is ineffable, there is nevertheless a great deal to be said of it. Fundamentally it is entirely itself, as each one of the Forms was originally designed to be. It is, as he says at 6.8.14.44, 'primarily itself and itself in a way that transcends finite Being' (πρώτως αὐτὸς καὶ ὑπερόντως αὐτός). As we have seen, the only way it can be thus itself, without Plotinus' running into problems akin to those about the multiplicity of Forms that so troubled Plato,

is for it to be not one and many, but infinite in itself. When we come to the level of the Divine Mind, however, this solution is no longer available. Νοῦς is not infinite of itself, though it has what recent commentators have referred to as a limited infinity which enables Plotinus to call it ἄπειρος.

And here we may very profitably call Proclus to witness as an aid to the understanding of the views of Plotinus. In proposition 93 of the *Elements of Theology*[22] Proclus writes that in things which have Being—again the world of Forms is meant—all infinitude is infinite only to inferior principles. This is a way of saying that in the domain of Being (the Plotinian Νοῦς) there are, within the finite nature of the whole, certain respects in which the hypostasis is both finite and infinite. In the thought of Proclus this doubleness is only to be accounted for by the reification of two further principles, finitude itself and infinitude itself, between the One and Being. These principles are described in proposition 159. Their rôle in the thought of Proclus himself need not concern us here. What is important is to recognize that they are the reified version of two distinct logical moments in the process of the emergence of Νοῦς from the One as described by Plotinus.[23] These two moments, for which we should look in 2.4.5 and 6.7.17, are first, the moment of the appearance of unlimited, undefined, Intelligible Matter, whose character, as we saw above, is 'otherness'—this is the αὐτοαπειρία of Proclus—and then the turning back of this otherness to its source—Proclus' Limit itself. Apparently in Proclus' system Limit itself is prior since it is more akin to the One (*in Parm.* 1124.1)[24]—this is rather un-Plotinian—but what matters for our present enquiry is the general position of Plotinus that Proclus is representing in his own peculiar way. Plotinus explains by his doctrine of the two logical moments, reified by Proclus, that in finite Beings, that is Forms, the world of Νοῦς, there are aspects of finitude and infinitude. The One, in contrast to this, is infinity itself.

We can profitably go still further along this line of enquiry. In 6.2.8.39, where Plotinus is discussing the categories of the

Intelligible World, the world of Being, he deduces—in accordance with what he supposes he has learned from Plato's *Sophist*—that in addition to Being, Motion and Rest, we must distinguish the two further categories of Sameness and Otherness, which represent, surely, the 'two logical moments' once again. If we sum up then the characteristic antitheses which describe the world of finite Beings, the world of the Forms, we can say that these Beings are both finite and infinite, that each of them partakes of Sameness and Otherness, of Unity and Multiplicity. Only when we realize this clearly are we able to understand the enormous gulf which Plotinus has fixed between the One and the Many, between infinite and finite Being.

This gulf might seem so great as to be unbridgeable. It might seem that human beings, living in the world of the finite, could not, except in some mystical way, aspire to knowledge of the One itself. And indeed we have seen that it is 'unspeakable', that 'no name names it', not even the name 'the One'. But yet the very fact that Plotinus can argue to its existence from its effects, can demonstrate from these finite Beings which exhibit a 'trace' of the One that there must be a One itself, indicates that there is some manner in which we can know something about the One, even if we cannot grasp it essentially. Plotinus does not pose as a specific problem the question of how he can make so many statements about a One which is unknowable, but we may perhaps hazard a guess that he holds to some kind of doctrine of analogy as a justification of his position.

This suggestion will probably be unpopular. One can imagine the reaction, for example, of Sweeney, who has written:[25] 'Of course Plotinus's universe is greatly different, since primacy is not given to being but to unity, and analogy of being between God and creatures is replaced by absolute ontic dissimilarity.' We should, however, be aware already of the dubious nature of this version of the relation between being and unity, and of the incorrectness of seeing Plotinus' thought

in terms of an antithesis of this kind. But what about the alleged ontic dissimilarity between the One and the others? We have seen already that the true relation between the One and the others is best expressed by the language of infinite and finite Being. If this is so, we may say that there would, *pace* Sweeney, appear to be some kind of link between the One and the others, unless our term Being is to be wholly divested of meaning.

What is this link? Plotinus sees it in the fact that something of cause is left in effect, some trace of the One is present in the others. Hence in a strange and analogous way he is able to say not only that the Intelligible World is Beauty, but that the One itself is Beauty, or a Beauty above Beauty.[26] We know that this means that the One is the cause of Beauty, just as it is the Good as cause of the good, and God as cause of the divine.[27] But although the One is called the One, Beauty, Goodness, God, it must not be limited by the limitations these terms convey when applied to the Divine Mind and the lower levels of reality. Although the One and the others are not separated by a Barthian gulf, yet the word 'Infinite' is not merely an empty compliment to a One which is only a superior version of the same kind of Being as the others.[28] The only justification for Plotinus' procedure would appear to be some kind of doctrine of analogy—a doctrine, however, of which he only gives hints, for example in 3.8.10, but which alone could support the possibility of the ascent of finite Being to infinite, of the soul to God.

Although we cannot go further than this in demonstrating the existence of some kind of theory of the analogy of finite Being to infinite, we can perhaps derive some help in seeing what Plotinus was trying to do from the attempts—and failures—of some of his successors, to expound a theory of the One. Such writers as Porphyry, the author of the anonymous commentary on the *Parmenides*,[29] and the Christian Neoplatonist Victorinus, offer explanations of the One which look remarkably similar, but in the case of the commentator and of Victorinus certainly, and probably in that of Porphyry as

well, differ on a most important matter of terminology from Plotinus; for whereas Plotinus' first principle is beyond Being (ὑπὲρ τοῦ εἶναι, ὑπὲρ τῆς οὐσίας), theirs is 'Being by itself' (τὸ εἶναι μόνον).

For the anonymous commentator we should not say that this 'Being by itself' is not-being (τὸ μὴ ὄν); rather we should say that we ourselves and all Beings (πάντα τὰ ὄντα) are nothing in comparison to it.[30] That is, for the One to exist, everything else must be annihilated. This manner of expressing the position could only have arisen in the mind of someone who, unlike Plotinus, had forgotten the original purpose of the Forms, namely to be perfect selfhood, perfect examples of finite Being. The Forms, out of which the One has historically developed, are here themselves annihilated. If this is so, what are we to make of the later passage where the commentator says that the first principle is 'Being by itself that is prior to the existent' (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος)?[31] What indeed can we say except that in such a philosophy the existent (the Form?) in some sense does not exist at all? This result is far from what Plotinus wished to achieve and, as we can now see, is the direct result of a misunderstanding of the relationship he supposed to exist between the One and the Intelligible World.

We know from Damascius that Porphyry at some time equated the One with an entity which later Neoplatonists—and probably Porphyry himself—called ὕπαρξις.[32] This ὕπαρξις is to be equated with Being by itself, without determination (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι), regarded as prior to the determined Being of the Forms. What Porphyry understood by this 'Being by itself' we cannot be absolutely certain from his own writings, and we should content ourselves for the moment with the fact that he uses the term 'not-being' (τὸ μὴ ὄν) for the One in the *Sententiae*.[33]

When we turn to Marius Victorinus, a fourth-century rhetorician who attempted to combine the Neoplatonism of Porphyry with Christianity, we know more firmly where we stand. For Victorinus the first Principle, God the Father, is

'pre-Being' (προόν).[34] Beyond what exists (*Supra* ὄν),[35] he is what the Greeks call 'the existence' (τὸ εἶναι)[36] and what Victorinus frequently translates as *exsistentia*[37]—by which he means ὕπαρξις. Now although *Supra* ὄν is Plotinian enough, Plotinus would have rejected τὸ εἶναι, and, as we shall see, ὕπαρξις as well. For ὕπαρξις (*exsistentia*) means the same as τὸ εἶναι μόνον (Being just by itself); it is Being without form, prior to all determination. This at first sight might look Plotinian enough too, but a glance at the other term for the One (τὸ μὴ ὄν) will show us its true meaning. In his letter to Candidus,[38] Victorinus distinguishes four ways of 'not-being'. One of these is a not-being that is other than Being (*iuxta alterius ad aliud naturam*)—this is the kind familiar from Plato's *Sophist* and whose relevance to Plotinus we have already discussed—and another is the not-being which is above Being, that is, the τὸ μὴ ὂν ὑπὲρ τὸ ὄν of Porphyry. But instead of assimilating these two kinds of not-being, as a true Plotinian would have done when speaking of the One, Victorinus tries to keep them apart and to equate his first Principle with 'not-being that is above Being' only. It is true that he says that this not-being that is above Being is 'another' kind of Being (*aliud* ὄν) and this partially saves him from disaster, but had he assimilated the two kinds of not-being from the start he would have grasped the Plotinian idea more firmly.

For the point is that when Plotinus holds that the One is other than finite Beings, though all the 'otherness' resides in these finite Beings, he is not simply saying that the One is different from the Forms in being Being without determination, nor is he saying that the One is a kind of substrate for the Forms which are themselves determinations of that substrate. What he is saying is that the One is a different kind of being from finite being, that is, that he is infinite being. The ὕπαρξις of Porphyry and the *exsistentia* of Victorinus' God seem to be the equivalents not of Plotinus' One, which they are supposed to represent, but of his Intelligible Matter, which is in fact indeterminate being, neither finite nor infinite, but

simply indefinite! Clearly such a God would not do for Victorinus, who must insist that his God exists (hence he is an *aliud* ὄν), but the difficulty that Victorinus is in can now be seen as arising from an attempt to apply the inadequate notion of *exsistentia* (ὕπαρξις) to a God who cannot be *reduced* to such a Porphyrian notion. Plotinus' God as infinite Being would not have led Victorinus into these difficulties, had Victorinus been able to grasp the notion of divine infinity at all. But since even Porphyry, Plotinus' disciple and friend, seems to have mistaken the One above finite Being for something which is not strictly any kind of Being at all, we can hardly grumble that Victorinus did the same thing.

We can see from the various examples of the anonymous commentator on the *Parmenides*, Porphyry and Marius Victorinus, into what difficulties a thinker may be led by failing to grasp the nature of the gulf between the infinite One and the finite Forms. The alternatives open to anyone who fails to grasp the One's infinity are either an annihilation of the Forms themselves through the attempt to keep the One in existence, or a reduction of the One to simple indetermination, truly a doctrine of mystification. And historically there were other curious results of failure to understand Plotinus' great achievement. Iamblichus,[39] apparently recognizing that Plotinus' first Principle ought not even to be called the One, supposes that there are two principles beyond the intelligible world of Forms, the One and a nameless and unnameable Principle beyond it. This must be seen either as a piece of literal-mindedness—from which Iamblichus and many other late Neoplatonists suffered, and which rendered him incapable of grasping why Plotinus called the unnameable One a One at all—or else as an attempt to bridge the gulf between infinite and finite by a 'law of mean terms', which demands something partly nameable and partly unnameable between the nameable and the unnameable.

But whichever was Iamblichus' reason, he can only have misunderstood what Plotinus was doing. And if Greek-

speakers failed to see this clearly, it was only to be expected that when the Neoplatonic idea of Being was rendered into Latin the difficulties would be insuperable. In the *Liber de Causis* there occurs the phrase *Prima rerum creatarum est esse.*[40] It is not surprising that this word *esse* was taken to mean existence *simpliciter* by those medieval thinkers who could not have had any idea of the implications of finitude built into the Greek τὸ εἶναι. The mistake is less pardonable when repeated in modern times.

All this evidence from writers other than Plotinus has been adduced to make understanding of Plotinus' own position doubly clear. This position can briefly be summarized as follows: the One is infinite, the others finite; the One is creator, the others creatures; the One is entirely itself, entirely infinite, the others are both finite and infinite in the way we have described; the One has no otherness, the others are other than the One. It is not the case that while the Forms exist, the One does not. Rather the One exists in an infinite way, the others finitely. There is no excuse for saying that the One does not exist and for thus confusing it with absolutely unqualified matter and absolute evil. To make such a confusion is to cast away the most important metaphysical proposition of Plotinus.

4

THE ONE'S KNOWLEDGE

There are a number of passages in the *Enneads* where it is the aim of Plotinus to demonstrate that the Aristotelian account of God's knowledge is inapplicable to the first principle of the cosmos. Plotinus seems frequently to take as his starting-point the famous section of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1074b 22–3) where it is laid down that God must either think himself or something else. Here the alternatives are clear. If God thinks himself he does not think other things; if he thinks other things he does not think himself. And Aristotle has no hesitation in his choice. God thinks himself. Nevertheless, whether he thinks himself or other things, there must be a sense in which his thoughts are separate from his essence, at least potentially, for thought is the actualization of the mind of the thinker which in the act of thinking becomes characterized by its objects. In the process of thought, the form of the thought-object and the thinking mind are one, but this unity is a unity formed by the resolution of a duality. As Plotinus might put it, the Aristotelian God is a unity of plurality, a One-Many.

Plotinus handles the question of the One's knowledge, if we may use this word in a rather extended sense, in two ways: he enquires whether the One has intellection, like the Aristotelian God,[1] and he wonders whether it has any kind of consciousness (συναίσθησις), and if so of what kind. We should treat these two aspects of the problem separately until we can draw separate conclusions. At that stage it is to be hoped that these conclusions will themselves lead to a further synthesis and that something definitive about the Plotinian One will be revealed.

We shall take the Aristotelian problem, the problem of νοῦς–νόησις and the One, first. The situation is best described

in 6.7.37. At the beginning of this chapter we read that of those who ascribe thought to the first principle some have supposed (with Aristotle) that the One could not know things less than itself. It is unimportant who precisely are the thinkers—if anybody precise—who are under discussion here, but we should observe that, as Plotinus presents them at least, they can hardly be orthodox Aristotelians, for they subscribe to some kind of emanation-theory. The Good, according to this school, can have no intellection of what is inferior and emanating from itself (τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ). Others of this group, adds Plotinus, think it extraordinary that the One should not in fact know everything. These are presumably persons who suppose (like Aquinas)[2] that God knows his products not in themselves, but in himself as cause, for even in Plotinus' view the One is the power behind everything (δύναμις πάντων).[3] Plotinus however never discriminates between the two schools, for both introduce a duality into their conception of the One.

The sixth tract of *Ennead* five is entirely given over to the problem of the intellectual knowledge, or lack of it, that can be ascribed to the One. Fundamentally the same argument recurs. If the One has intellection, we must understand it in the way that Aristotle understood it, and if we understand it in this way then the One itself will seem to need something else to complete itself. But the One needs nothing else (5.6.4), for if it did, it would be other than the thing which it needs, and, as Plotinus is so fond of saying, there is no otherness about the One.

Plotinus never tires of repeating himself. Indeed there is a sense in which his every sentence contains his whole philosophy. And for our present problem of the possible intellection of the One there is a third source in the *Enneads* at which we should look briefly, namely 3.9.9. Here again it seems that Plotinus is conscious of the Aristotelian alternatives. The first line of the chapter—as correctly printed by Henry and Schwyzer—must indicate that the first principle which is 'beyond Being' has no intellection (οὐ νοεῖ). Plotinus then

asks in line six whether this means that the first principle which is 'beyond Being' has not even intellection of itself, like Aristotle's God, and decides, as we should now expect, and for reasons which we now know, that it cannot have intellection of itself. For future reference we should observe in line five of this chapter the suggestion that the One may possess itself (Ἢ ᾗ ἔχει ἑαυτό;)—an odd and unfortunate phrase, it would seem, which can hardly avoid introducing notions of duality, of possessor and possessed, where Plotinus would least like to find them.

So much then at this stage for Aristotelian intellection. We should now turn our attention to the question of consciousness of self. If the One has no intellection of itself—provided intellection be understood in an Aristotelian fashion—are we to say that it is conscious of itself?[4] 3.9.9 gives us a first answer to this question also. The Good has no need of consciousness of itself (παρακολούθησις αὐτῷ). Consciousness of self, like intellection, is a secondary and demands a subject and object. The same idea—with the word συναίσθησις in place of παρακολούθησις—occurs at 5.3.13.21. The very word συν-αίσθησις indicates the plurality, says Plotinus. Just as the One cannot have intellection, neither therefore can it have any kind of consciousness of itself. 5.6.5.4 makes the same point. The One has no need even of consciousness of itself; it is superior to self-consciousness as well as to intellection. And in case we still have any remaining doubts there is 6.7.41.26 to lay them to rest. The One, says Plotinus, is greater than to exist in such a manner as to have knowledge of itself (γνῶσις), intellection of itself (νόησις), or consciousness of itself (συναίσθησις). And if we wonder why Plotinus wishes to deny self-consciousness to the One, we have only to look at the end of *Ennead* 1.4.10 for an answer. MacKenna-Page's translation runs as follows: 'So that it would seem that consciousness tends to blunt the activities upon which it is exercised, and that in the degree in which these pass unobserved they are purer, and have more effect, more vitality, and that, conse-

quently, the Proficient arrived at this state has the truer fullness of life, life not spilled out in sensation but gathered closely within itself.' It is true that here Plotinus specifically names sensation as the antithesis of the higher life, but the full significance of his remarks is only to be understood if we realize that it is self-consciousness that is the real weakener of activity. As Plotinus has said earlier in the same chapter: 'A reader will often be quite unconscious when he is most intent: in a feat of courage there can be no sense either of the brave action or of the fact that all that is done conforms to the rules of courage.'

But what we have seen so far is not the whole story of the One in regard to self-consciousness and knowledge. What we have seen so far has been commonly recognized by the commentators; what follows is dark and obscure and has been largely neglected. A hint that we do not yet know the truth in our present investigation is offered by the very puzzling sentence at 5.3.13.6: 'But when we question and ask: "Then is it without perception of itself (ἀναίσθητον ἑαυτοῦ) or consciousness of itself (οὐδὲ παρακολουθοῦν ἑαυτῷ) and does it not know itself?", we must bear in mind that when we speak in this way we direct ourselves to the opposites.' What this appears to mean is that one must not jump from the view that the One has no συναίσθησις of itself to the conclusion that it must therefore be ἀναίσθητον or from the view that it has no νόησις to the conclusion that it is ἀνόητον. If this is the sense of the passage, however, Plotinus has obscured his meaning in the rest of the chapter by insisting that the One has no συναίσθησις or νόησις but not examining the related question of whether it is therefore ἀναίσθητον or ἀνόητον.

The number of passages attributing some kind of more positive doctrine to Plotinus on these matters is few, but what they have to tell us is of importance. The first we should consider is 5.4.2.14ff. It is worth examining this in detail. It runs as follows: 'But how can the Intellectual Principle (νοῦς) be a product of the Intellectual Object (νοητόν)? In this way: the Intellectual Object is self-gathered (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένον) and

is not deficient as the seeing and knowing principle must be—deficient, I mean, as needing an object; it is therefore no unconscious thing (οὐκ ἔστιν οἷον ἀναίσθητον); all its content and accompaniment are its possession; it is self-distinguishing throughout (πάντη διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ); it is the seat of life as of all things; it is itself that self-intellection which takes place in eternal repose, that is to say, in a mode other than that of the Intellectual-Principle (καὶ ἡ κατανόησις αὐτοῦ αὐτὸ οἱονεὶ συναισθήσει οὖσα ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ καὶ νοήσει ἑτέρως ἢ κατὰ τὴν νοῦ νόησιν)' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

We must first recall that this is an early tract of Plotinus. 5.4 is the seventh in Porphyry's chronological list, and although this may ultimately appear to have no significance, it should at least be borne in mind, particularly as the description of the first principle as ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ καὶ νοήσει ἑτέρως etc. cannot but call our attention to those other passages of the *Enneads* (2.9.1.27ff., 3.9.1) which Dodds has taught us are Plotinus' differing reflections on Numenius.[5] According to Dodds' account, in the early tract 3.9.1 Plotinus holds that the Ideal Living Creature of Plato's *Timaeus* cannot be simply a νοητόν; it must also be a νοῦς which exists ἐν στάσει καὶ ἑνότητι καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ, like the first Noῦς of Numenius' system.[6] In 2.9.1.27, on the other hand, there is said to be no νοῦς ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ τινι. What can be deduced from this except that in the early period of his life, quite probably under Numenian influence, Plotinus toyed with the idea of a double νοῦς, one active and the other static, the static and higher also being a νοητόν, but that he later came to reject such ideas? There is evidence then that at some time Plotinus might speak of a νοητόν which itself, though inactive, had some kind of intellection. This is almost what we have in 5.4.2. In this passage, which we have quoted at length, we can read of the κατανόησις of the One, of its 'kind of self-consciousness' *in eternal rest*, and of its νόησις which is however different from the νόησις of the Second Hypostasis, the Divine Mind. Furthermore the One here, as elsewhere in Plotinus, is regarded as a νοητόν,[7] in

some sense, as the thought-object of νοῦς. Are we therefore to assume that in 5.4.2 Plotinus' view of the relation of νόησις to the One is still affected by Numenian ideas which he later discarded?

We might suppose that the word κατανόησις (5.4.2.17) would provide us with some way out of the impasse. In two other passages of Plotinus where this word occurs (5.3.1.13; 4.7.10.45) it is used of Noῦς and Soul specifically—so our first impression would be that it would normally not be used of the One and that 5.4.2.17 is thus to be accounted to Numenian influence. But 3.9.9.22 should give us pause, for here τὸ κατανοεῖν is specifically denied to the One; and we remember that 3.9 is the *Ennead* with the most obviously Numenian interpretation of the *Timaeus*. The warning must be taken that Plotinus' use of terminology is not always a guide to his thought. It is still possible therefore that even after the influence of Numenius had waned Plotinus might have accepted some kind of κατανόησις of the One, for he might understand κατανόησις differently in 5.4.2 and 3.9.9. Since in 3.9 therefore κατανοεῖν is specifically denied to the One whereas νοῦς is interpreted in a rather Numenian fashion, we cannot assume that in the nearly contemporary 5.4 Plotinus was unaware of the Numenian ring about his words. The position seems to be that in these early days Plotinus more or less accepted a Numenian division of νοῦς (into a νοῦς ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ and a νοῦς κινούμενος), though he already positively rejected the view that the νοῦς ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ was the first principle. The first principle in 3.9.9 is not a νοῦς, and has not therefore that kind of κατανόησις; it is on the other hand the One, with its own kind of κατανόησις (different from that of νοῦς, 5.4.2). Yet though it is the One, it can still be described by the Numenian phrase ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ.

We have still not said all that can be said of 5.4.2, for it is in that chapter that we find the direct remark that the One οὐκ ἔστιν οἷον ἀναίσθητον which our earlier discussion might have led us to expect somewhere in the *Enneads*. In 5.3 we

saw that Plotinus asked the question whether the One is ἀναίσθητον but declined to give any answer. Here the answer is that the One is not 'in a sense ἀναίσθητον', which tells us no more than we know already, yet which does at least respect that knowledge, namely that there is some undefined kind of consciousness or knowledge which we can attribute to the One.

Finally this chapter gives us the description of the One as self-distinguishing throughout (πάντη διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ). What are we to make of this? Surely not that the One distinguishes itself as an object, for duality would then be implied and the uniqueness of the One would be lost. Perhaps 5.3.15.31 is something of a guide. Here Plotinus considers and rejects a theory that the many are in the One potentially and in an indistinct manner (ὡς μὴ διακεκριμένα). This is rejected on the grounds that such an indistinct potentiality would have to be explained. (Plotinus does not add that if he accepted this he would be coming very close to pantheism.) But if the One were unable to distinguish the others within itself, could it be said to distinguish itself? In the light of this passage at 5.3.15.31, it seems possible that the πάντη διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ is little more than an absolute reaffirmation of the One's simplicity, and that it means little more than would a statement that whatever the One could distinguish would be itself. This is perhaps not the most likely interpretation, but it is a possible one, and general accounts of the passage must take it into account.

Thus we have little further information from 5.4.2. Again we see that there is some sense in which the One is not ἀναίσθητον. We see also that it has some kind of νόησις, though this must be treated with circumspection since the attribution may merely mark a last survival of the Numenian νοῦς in the thought of Plotinus. And that is all. As to the nature of the One's consciousness we still know nothing, except that if πάντη διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ means merely that the One is simple, it tells us that its knowledge must be entirely of its own simplicity.

We can now turn in the hope of further illumination to 6.8.16. This tract has not much to offer to our present enquiry, but what it has is of some value. Unlike 5.4, 6.8 is not an early treatise; it is number thirty-nine in Porphyry's chronological list. This fact makes the recognition of the term ὑπερνόησις, applied to the One in line thirty-three, doubly significant. The mere existence of the word indicates that the νόησις ἑτέρως ἢ κατὰ τὴν νοῦ νόησιν of 5.4.2 is not simply a hangover from Numenius. And the idea occurs again at 6.8.18.26, where there is a reference to the One as τὸν οἷον ἐν ἑνὶ νοῦν οὐ νοῦν ὄντα. Plotinus then really did envisage some kind of νόησις as appropriate to the first principle. But beyond this, unfortunately, the treatise gives no further help, except for the reminder that the One is not what it 'happened to be' but what it 'willed to be'.

And so we must turn to another difficult section: 5.1.7.10. Here problems of translation are so great—and are worsened by problems about the correct text—as to make it necessary to quote the Greek in full and follow this up with selections from various modern renderings. Henry and Schwyzer's text runs as follows: Ὧν οὖν ἐστι δύναμις, ταῦτα ἀπὸ τῆς δυνάμεως οἷον σχιζομένη ἡ νόησις καθορᾷ· ἢ οὐκ ἂν ἦν νοῦς. Ἐπεὶ καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἔχει ἤδη οἷον συναίσθησιν τῆς δυνάμεως, ὅτι δύναται οὐσίαν. Αὐτὸς γοῦν δι' αὐτὸν καὶ ὁρίζει τὸ εἶναι αὐτῷ τῇ παρ' ἐκείνου δυνάμει. MacKenna-Page's translation (based on approximately the same text, though probably reading παρ' αὐτοῦ with all editors since Creuzer) runs as follows: 'The items of this potentiality the divine intellection brings out, so to speak, from the unity and knows them in detail, as it must if it is to be an intellectual principle. It has besides a consciousness, as it were, within itself of this same potentiality; it knows that it can of itself beget an hypostasis and can determine its own Being by the virtue emanating from its prior.' We should notice about this translation first of all that MacKenna-Page makes νοῦς the subject of ἔχει. It is νοῦς that has some kind of consciousness of the potentiality of the One, and

νοῦς that δύναται οὐσίαν. There seems to be one certain error here. The One must be the subject of δύναται—which can only mean 'causes'. Οὐσίαν must mean not 'an hypostasis' as MacKenna-Page suggests, but the specific hypostasis of νοῦς. "Οτι δύναται οὐσίαν[8] then will mean 'that the One causes (is the δύναμις of) Being'. In their *apparatus* Henry and Schwyzer agree about the subject of δύναται, but they believe that the One is likely also to be the subject of ἔχει, and thus suppose that the One is itself in some way conscious of its own power. The precise wording of Henry and Schwyzer's note, however, might indicate to the discriminating reader a divergence of opinion between the two scholars, and other evidence would show this to be correct. Henry has remarked elsewhere that he thinks that νοῦς is the subject of ἔχει, on the grounds that the One could not have consciousness of its own power since this would imply a consciousness directed away from itself and towards plurality.[9] Schwyzer,[10] however, thinks that the word οἷον removes the difficulty about the nature of the One's consciousness and that τὸ ἕν is thus the subject of ἔχει.[11] The point about οἷον seems inconclusive. Schwyzer is right to hold that such a word *could* be inserted to enable Plotinus to speak of the One, but does not demonstrate that he is actually doing so. Henry's doubts are well founded and could be strengthened by reflecting that making the One the subject of ἔχει would apparently involve introducing further duality into the One itself. When Plotinus wants to express a notion which we can sometimes render only by saying that 'the One has something', he often prefers to use the Greek idiom πάρεστιν αὐτῷ in order to avoid making the One the subject of a transitive verb. If the One has something, there is within the One a 'having' part and a 'had' part, as Aristotle might have put it.

The question of the change of subject is not as difficult as has been supposed. We have been told in lines 9–10 that τὸ ἕν is the δύναμις πάντων—a common theme in the *Enneads*, as we have seen; hence in lines 12 and 14 there is no difficulty in referring δυνάμεως and δυνάμει to the One, and δύναται to

the same source in line 13. My translation of the relevant parts of the whole passage therefore would run as follows: 'Νοῦς perceives these things by splitting them up in some way. If it did not do so, it would not be a νοῦς. And furthermore νοῦς derives from itself a kind of consciousness of the power of the One, a consciousness that the One brings Being into existence. And νοῦς distinguishes its own existence by means of that power derived from the One.'

This passage then affords us no further evidence of the self-consciousness or self-knowledge of the One. The word συναίσθησις does not in fact apply here to the One at all, but to νοῦς. We have thus to content ourselves still with realizing that the One is not 'such as to be ἀναίσθητον', that it has ὑπερνόησις, but that we cannot get any further in the search for what Plotinus actually intends by these terms.

The last section of the *Enneads* which may prove of help to us is 6.7.38. In the previous section, as we have already mentioned, Plotinus is arguing in his customary fashion against those who wish to place an Aristotelian νοῦς at the head of the universe. At the beginning of chapter 38 we find him again on the familiar ground of saying that the remark 'The One is' does the One an injustice, for such a predicate denies the One's unity. And when we say: 'He is the Good', we do not mean to predicate goodness of him but to call him by the name 'the Good'. This being so, says Plotinus, even if we cannot imagine the One having knowledge of itself as an existent, can it not have knowledge of itself as good? But the answer to this must also be negative, for if the One could say 'I am good', it would be limiting itself by saying 'I am', and thus, of course, restricting itself to the finite.

It looks as though the final result of the chapter will be that the One has no knowledge of itself of any kind. As Plotinus puts it: '*Qua* good it does not think itself.' He then however extraordinarily adds ἢ τί; ('But *qua* what does it think itself?'). And in his elusive way the answer comes back that the One has nothing and thus, we must suppose, cannot think itself

qua anything. It has no νόησις. What it will have (in Plotinus' language, What there will be for it) is some kind of simple apprehension (ἐπιβολή) directed towards itself. And with this cryptic utterance the chapter ends.

The following chapter sheds a little more light on the sources of Plotinus' idea, but does nothing further to indicate the nature of the 'apprehension' he is thinking of. We learn that it is only the One itself that can have this 'apprehensional' approach of which Plotinus has been speaking (τὸ ἐπιβάλλον ἑαυτῷ τί ἂν εἴη ἢ αὐτό;), but then the chapter returns to the familiar notions about the One's not having intellection, since if it did, it would admit of 'otherness' or duality. In line 19 we hear that it will know neither anything else nor itself. On the contrary it will maintain in 'august' repose (σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται). Thus we know, for what it is worth, that the apprehension (ἐπιβολή) of the One is somehow associated with absolute immobility. The 'knowledge' then of the One is by implication wholly different from any other knowledge that we can imagine—but this is only to be expected if the One is infinite where all else is finite.

Yet although the One can know neither itself nor anything else in any ordinary manner of knowing, as is repeated in line 27, Providence is saved, in Plotinus' view, by the fact that the One is that from which all else is derived and by which, presumably, all else is stamped. The phrase 'It will stand in august repose' which we first noticed in line 20 is repeated in 27–8 and 29. Plato is said to be the originator of it, and Plotinus is thinking of the extraordinary interpretation he gives of that passage of the *Sophist* (248 E–249 A) where Plato points out that Being (οὐσία) cannot be without life and mind and cannot exist 'awful and holy...fixed and immovable' (σεμνὸν καὶ ἅγιον...ἀκίνητον ἑστός). Plotinus interprets this as a suggestion that the Second Hypostasis, the existent Forms, cannot be without νοῦς, but that by implication the One *will* be 'awful and holy...fixed and immovable'. Hence Plotinus' σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται.

But although our conclusions are still somewhat tenuous, the use of σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται here, with its obvious reference to the *Sophist*, will add a little more light to a passage from the early treatise 5.4.2 which we considered above, and in particular to the phrase ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ (l. 18). It was noticed above that in this treatise, which ascribes a κατανόησις to the One and in which Plotinus says that the One is οἱονεὶ συναισθήσει οὖσα and that it has a kind of intellection other than that of νοῦς, there are certain suspicions of the influence of Numenius. In particular, the phrase ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ, with its echoes of the description of Numenius' first principle, made us wonder how far we could take the remarks in 5.4 as an exposition of Plotinus' ultimate position on the One's knowledge or consciousness. But now we can recognize that even the phrase ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ harks back not only to Numenius but, like the more obvious σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται, to Plato's *Sophist*. We have already remarked that the κατανόησις and the νόησις ἑτέρως ἢ κατὰ τὴν νοῦ νόησιν of the early 5.4 (number 7 in chronological order) are established by the ὑπερνόησις of the much later 6.8.16 (number 39). We can now add that the perhaps even more suspect στάσει ἀιδίῳ of the same 5.4 is confirmed—also in a context dealing with the knowledge of the One—by the later 6.7 (number 38). Once again it seems that except possibly in language—ἐπιβολή does not occur in 5.4, and in the later treatise ὑπερνόησις replaces κατανόησις—Plotinus' doctrine of the One's 'knowledge' has not developed.

The only further help to be derived from 6.7.38–9 is the word ἐπιβολή itself. Plotinus may have selected it because it seems to imply duality less than συναίσθησις or νόησις.[12] It appears to have no technical Platonic, Aristotelian, or Stoic senses which could confuse the reader of the *Enneads*. The only philosophers to use the word technically before the days of Plotinus were the followers of Epicurus. Their use of it is still obscure, but one or two points about it may shed a little light on its importance in Plotinus.

The evidence about ἐπιβολή which can be derived from

Epicurus' letter to Herodotus and from the Κύριαι Δόξαι and other Epicurean sources handed down by Diogenes Laertius in his tenth book can be supplemented by a few passages of Lucretius.[13] Perhaps the best remarks on this subject, brief though they are, are those of Vlastos,[14] who manages to attribute to the Epicureans a consistent doctrine which is in accord with their general theories of the primacy of sensation as a criterion. According to Vlastos 'ἐπιβολὴ διανοίας is the term employed. . . of just that mental function which concentrates thinking on the precise image which is "stamped" upon the mind in sensation'. (There are, of course, ἐπιβολαί of the διάνοια and of 'the other criteria'. (D.L. 10.51.)) This picture should be supplemented by the evidence adduced by Bailey that the διάνοια also 'apprehends' images too fine to be grasped by the ordinary senses (διάνοια itself is a 'refined' sense), such as images of the gods and of the dead.[15] Ἐπιβολή then is a comprehensive (ἀθρόας, D.L. 10.35) view of the data provided by the senses or the mind, and an ἐπιβολὴ διανοίας will actually be brought to bear on such facts as are not immediately clear to the five senses, such as the existence and primacy of atoms and the relevance of the void. In addition to its 'comprehensiveness' we should notice that an ἐπιβολή can be not a grasping of new external data but a casting back of the mind on itself and on whatever impressions it has.

A possible reason therefore for Plotinus' choice of the term ἐπιβολή to describe the 'knowing' of the One is now available. No one would confuse the Plotinian process with the Epicurean, for Epicurus' sensationalism is complete. That being so, however, we can see whether any features of Epicurus' ἐπιβολή are also relevant to the *Enneads*. We may concentrate on the 'comprehensiveness' of ἐπιβολή and on the fact that it is a turning back of the mind on itself.

The first section of the *Enneads* that is helpful to us here is 3.8.9.20ff. The One, says Plotinus, exceeds νοῦς, whereas the highest knowledge we ourselves possess is that of νοῦς. By what ἐπιβολῇ ἀθρόᾳ can we then know the One? And the

answer is that we can know it by means of what is like it in ourselves. In other words, as we should expect from the word ἐπιβολή itself, it is only the One in us that enables us to know the One in itself. Ἐπιβολή is then, as for the Epicureans, both ἀθρόα and a turning of the self back upon itself.

The phrase ἐπιβολὴν ἀθρόαν occurs again at 4.4.1.20 where it describes the soul's comprehensive grasp of the Intelligible World, and again of the soul at 4.4.8.6; but no further help is offered by these passages. Finally we come to 6.8.11.23 where what we already know is confirmed. If we want to form an ἐπιβολή of God, says Plotinus, we must abolish all notion of place from our considerations. But this merely means that we must be like God to know God, indeed that in a sense it is the One in us that has an ἐπιβολή of the One in the cosmos—and that we know well already.

There appear to be no further passages with much to contribute on this topic[16] and we must therefore sum up what we know. It appears certain that Plotinus wishes to ascribe some manner of knowing to the One, but that he is at a loss to understand its manner of operation. It is analogous to νοῦς if νοῦς is not conceived in the Aristotelian fashion. Its 'object' is the One itself, but a knowledge directed towards the One itself might involve some knowledge of the One as δύναμις πάντων, even though this is not clear in the *Enneads* and Plotinus could only admit it if the One's unity were safeguarded. The problem for Plotinus might be formulated as follows: If the One 'knows' itself as what it is, namely infinite Being, how or in what way does knowledge of infinite Being imply knowledge of finite Being, especially if the knowing is not the knowing of oneself as an object? And the problem of self-consciousness is the same as the problem of self-knowledge.

Nor does the word ἐπιβολή help us much here. This may be Plotinus' favourite word for the 'knowledge' of the One, and it may avoid the Aristotelian implications of ὑπερνόησις or κατανόησις, but it does not get us much further in understanding the *nature* of the One's 'knowledge'. What all this seems

to suggest is that the knowledge of an infinite Being is so different from the knowledge of what is finite that it cannot be described in finite terms. We know that such knowledge is self-directed, but the self is seen not as object but as subject. Only the One itself and the mystic in union with him have knowledge of this kind. Its 'object' is the infinite and indescribable. As of the One itself, so of its knowledge, Plotinus would presumably have to say: 'He who has seen it knows what I mean.'

5

BEAUTY, THE BEAUTIFUL, AND THE GOOD

Dean Inge tried to show that Plotinus 'has three names for his Absolute—the One, the Good, and Beauty'.[1] He remarks elsewhere, however (p. 122), that although Plotinus calls the Absolute the One and the Good, he does not call it the Beautiful. Inge attempts to show that whereas the term 'Beauty' (καλλονή) will be appropriate to the One, 'the Beautiful' (τὸ καλόν) will not. He admits that there is a certain awkwardness in this, but says that the reasons for it are apparent from his exposition. The reasons, or rather reason, are, according to Inge, that 'Beauty is not embodied in forms'. This is his translation of τὸ κάλλος οὐ μεμόρφωται in 6.7.32.38–9. The One, says Inge, being formless, could hardly be τὸ καλόν. It must therefore be καλλονή, as it is in 6.2.18.1.

But this is to state a problem, not to solve it. If Plotinus thinks that the One is καλλονή but not τὸ καλόν, is he simply juggling with words? Plato surely would speak of αὐτὸ τὸ κάλλος and αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and mean the same thing. Does Plotinus' distinction, if not merely verbal, indicate a critique of the Platonic? What kind of beauty, if any, is καλλονή? Since Inge's discussion answers none of these questions, it will be worth while looking again at Beauty and the Beautiful in the *Enneads* with a view both to seeing their relation to the One and, if possible, to determining why Plotinus seems to require them to be distinguished one from the other.

The main sources for our discussion will be *Enneads* 1.6.6, 1.6.7, 5.5.12, 6.7.32 and 6.7.33. Despite Inge's account of some of this material, it will be necessary to re-examine it to gain a clear picture of Plotinus' position. We may best start with 5.5.12. In lines 7–19 we learn that everything that exists has a natural and necessary desire for the Good. The recogni-

tion and consequent desire for the Beautiful, however, only appear in those who have some kind of knowledge and have experienced some kind of awakening. This awakening, when it occurs, can be painful in the desires it arouses, whereas since there is in all of us an aspiration towards the Good even when we are asleep, our conscious recognition of Goodness does not bring the same disturbing amazement. Hence our love of the Beautiful is secondary and the Beautiful itself is seen to be secondary to the Good.

Two other arguments follow to drive home the priority of the Good. Whereas the Good, if attained, is a sufficient end for the seeker—and Plotinus means all seekers—the Beautiful is not only not available to all but even when present seems to have its existence outside the self, to exist for itself and not for its possessor.[2] What Plotinus seems to mean by this antithesis is that whereas the Good, when grasped, is seen to be and is the end of human life, Beauty is still of secondary rank, still outside the self and therefore not the ultimate constituent of the self.

The second argument also depends on the same idea of the fundamental need of the Good which is present in the soul and on the inessential nature of Beauty. We may be satisfied with what appears beautiful, but only reality will do in the case of the Good. The seeming beauty may satisfy since Beauty can be dispensed with; the seeming Good is inadequate since it is not the seeming Good but the real Good that is the ground of our Being.

The distinction of the Good and the Beautiful is clear, and Plotinus makes the inferiority of the Beautiful still clearer in ll. 32–3 when he declares that 'yonder' in the supra-sensible world the Good has no need of the Beautiful but the Beautiful stands in need of the Good. Yet this sentence in fact also complicates matters, for Plotinus has, in the first part of it, remarked that both the Good and the Beautiful participate in the One which is prior to them. This seems to confuse the previous arguments, which are based on the idea of the Good as

the ground of Being for all things and thus as identified with the One. Whatever the solution of this—and it may be that Plotinus is simply trying to point out that if the Good is regarded as primarily a moral power, this is an inadequate account of it—we can be quite sure of the inferior rank assigned to the Beautiful. Sometimes, he concludes, the Beautiful will distract the unknowing (τοὺς οὐκ εἰδότας) from the Good itself. But we should notice his comment on this. The Good, he says, is the older, not in time but in truth and because it has the prior power, that is, all power. The Good is now therefore again identified with the One, and Beauty is relegated to second place because it is less true, because, that is, it has less of reality. The standard is not the Beautiful but the real. It is the real which is called the One and the Good. What we shall have to investigate is how Plotinus regards the real in relation to the Beautiful (τὸ καλόν).

The exact meaning of parts of 1.6.6 will always, I fear, be uncertain, though the general sense of lines 21 ff. is clear. Plotinus says that ἡ καλλονή (Beauty) is the Being of what is real, that its opposite is the ugly, that is, the first evil, and that we should identify good and beautiful (ἀγαθόν τε καὶ καλόν) and again the Good (τἀγαθόν) and Beauty (καλλονή). To help us a little he states his opinion more clearly in line 25. Beauty (καλλονή), which is to be identified with the Good, is the first principle; next comes νοῦς, which is to be identified with τὸ καλόν. Thus we see that the first hypostasis is to be called καλλονή; the second τὸ καλόν. We recall that in 5.5.12 it is τὸ καλόν that is inferior to the Good. So far, then, no contradiction between the two treatises is to be seen.

An apparent difficulty arises in 1.6.7. Here Plotinus bursts out into a famous description of the ascent to the Good. Anyone who has seen it, he says, knows what I am saying, that it is beautiful (καλόν). The difficulty is that in the previous section, as we have seen, he declined to call the One τὸ καλόν, preferring and distinguishing καλλονή. But if τὸ καλόν is καλόν, as we shall see it to be, and if καλλονή is also καλόν,

does not the distinction between καλλονή and τὸ καλόν become a mere juggling with words? The same difficulty arises in lines 14–15 where Plotinus recalls that the man who has not yet seen the One denies it as good, but the man who has seen it has within him a sense of wonder at it as beautiful. Inge remarks that this passage is one of those where Plotinus shows that he does not wish to place the Beautiful on a lower level than the Good, but his explanation is very much oversimplified.[3] The truth of the matter seems to be that in passages describing the ascent of the soul to the One Plotinus is tremendously indebted to the terminology of Plato's *Symposium* and that here the Beautiful is the aim of the philosopher's quest. It is easy to see, of course, why Plotinus says that before attaining the One the philosopher desires it as a good but after seeing it wonders at its beauty. This is explained in 5.5.12, as we have seen. It is because some sensing of the Good is always present in man, though only the more developed soul can have a consciousness of Beauty. But we are still confronted with the problem of the apparent description of the One as καλόν and not καλλονή.

We have already suggested that the rôle of τὸ καλόν in the *Symposium* is relevant here. The *Symposium* is quoted at 1.6.7. 9–10 and 21–3. In order to make use of Plato's language and imagery Plotinus has, perhaps carelessly, dropped the distinction between τὸ καλόν and καλλονή which he developed in the previous section. In other passages where he speaks of his personal experience of the ascent, however, he is rather more careful to show that the One, if καλόν, is so in an unusual way. We shall later examine what that way is. Let us first look at the personal passages to which we have alluded. These are as follows:

(*a*) 4.8.1.3. Here, in what must be taken as an ascent to the One,[4] Plotinus describes himself as θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον ὁρῶν κάλλος. The Beauty of the One is of a wondrous and stupendous kind.

(*b*) 6.9.4.18. Here Plotinus says that the soul has knowledge

of the ἀγλαΐα of the One. Ἀγλαΐα is an old word apparently revived by Numenius[5] to describe the splendour of the first principle. Plotinus uses it of νοῦς and the soul as well as here of the One. It seems highly likely, however, that he thought it particularly applicable to the Beauty of the One as seen by the aspirant to union, since he uses it not only here but also in 6.9.9, where he describes the mystic as having ἑαυτὸν ἠγλαϊσμένον. The use of ἀγλαΐα to describe what the mystic sees of the One dispenses Plotinus here from the use of the difficult words καλόν or καλλονή. There is no attempt to identify the One with ἀγλαΐα, as has been the case with καλλονή. All that Plotinus says is that the aspirant to perfection obtains understanding of this ἀγλαΐα.

(*c*) 6.9.9.47–58. This passage is interesting because it opens with a parallel appeal to the εἴ τις οὖν εἶδεν αὐτό, οἶδεν ὃ λέγω, ὅπως καλόν of 1.6.7.2–3 with which we began. Here Plotinus writes Ὅστις δὲ εἶδεν, οἶδεν ὃ λέγω, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ... ἑαυτὸν μὲν ἠγλαϊσμένον κ.τ.λ. The word καλόν does not occur in 6.9.9, despite the parallel with 1.6.7 and despite the allusions to the *Symposium* (ll. 32–3). Is Plotinus being more careful here to avoid describing the One as καλόν? Does the presence of a cognate of ἀγλαΐα show this awareness? After considering these three passages we can at the very least conclude that Plotinus is generally loath to call the One καλόν. We need not therefore assume that because he does so in 1.6.7 he has overthrown the distinction between καλλονή and τὸ καλόν which he has made in 1.6.6. With the *Symposium* in mind he has temporarily dropped the distinction he has drawn, though he has not abandoned it.

(*d*) 6.7.40.2. Here Plotinus simply mentions that those who have had contact with the One know that it has no intellection.

We may now return to *Ennead* 1.6. 1.6.8 contains nothing additional that will forward our present enquiry. Line 2 speaks of the One's κάλλος ἀμήχανον, but this, paralleling the θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον κάλλος of 4.8.1, only reiterates that the

Beauty of the One is of a unique kind. As to what this is, we still have no more information. The last few lines of chapter nine, however, difficult though they are, bring us firmly back to the distinction between the καλλονή of the One and the τὸ καλόν of νοῦς which we found in chapter six. When the soul rises to νοῦς, says Plotinus (ll. 34ff.), it will say that the Ideas are Beauty (τὸ κάλλος). Beyond the Ideas it will be in the realm of the Good which radiates the Beautiful before it. So far, although the terms are confusing, the idea is clear. The Good is transcendent. The Ideas, emanating from the Good, are Beauty (τὸ κάλλος) and the Beautiful (τὸ καλόν). Then rather confusingly Plotinus sums up all that he has been saying in two ways. If we take the whole supra-sensible world together we may say it is καλόν. This of course loses the distinction of τὸ καλόν and καλλονή again, but that is immediately rectified by what follows. If we divide the Intelligible World, says Plotinus, we may say that the place of Forms, that is νοῦς, is the νοητὸν καλόν, while the transcendent Good is the source (πηγήν) and origin (ἀρχήν) of the Beautiful. Here then fundamentally is our distinction in a new guise. Καλλονή, the One, is now seen as the source or origin of τὸ καλόν. We should recall 1.6.6.26 (τἀγαθόν· ἀφ' οὗ νοῦς εὐθὺς τὸ καλόν).

Unfortunately Plotinus almost confuses the issue again in the very last sentence of 1.6.9 by writing a few words which have in most cases baffled his translators. They run: Ἡ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τἀγαθὸν καὶ καλὸν πρῶτον θήσεται· πλὴν ἐκεῖ τὸ καλόν. We should not translate this, with MacKenna-Page, as 'The Primal Good and the Primal Beauty have the one dwelling-place and, thus, always, Beauty's seat is There', nor, with Bréhier, 'Sinon, on commencerait par faire du Bien et du Beau un seul et même principe. En tout cas, le Beau est dans l'intelligible.' The words must mean, as Cilento says: 'Ovvero, si porrà insieme il Bene e il primo Bello, osservando, beninteso, che il Bello è nel regno dello Spirito.' That is, Plotinus is rephrasing the now familiar intuition. We may call

the One which is καλλονή and ἀρχὴ τοῦ καλοῦ the First-Beautiful. If we do so we must naturally remember that τὸ καλόν, the Beautiful, is a Form. What we have learned so far then is that καλλονή is the source of τὸ καλόν, the One is the source of Form. We shall therefore expect to find later that καλλονή is formless—it has already appeared as ἀμήχανον κάλλος—and if it is formless it cannot strictly be καλόν.

The next sections that we must examine in some detail are *Enneads* 6.7.32 and 6.7.33. Chapter 32 begins with the question: 'Where is he that has made such Beauty' (that is, the Beauty of the Intelligible World) 'and such life and has begotten Being?' We are then looking for something beyond Beauty (τὸ κάλλος). It might be possible, says Plotinus, to linger among the beauties of the Forms, but in fact we must always seek for their source. This source cannot be any one of the beautiful Forms. It must be beyond all 'shape'—he means intelligible, not sensible, shape, as we shall see—and since it is beyond all shape it must be formless (ἀνείδεον). From that which is ἀνείδεον all intelligible shape (μορφὴ νοερά) derives (l. 10).

Since the One is shapeless and the source of Beauty, it is only to be expected that as compared with the Beauty of the Intelligible World it will be different in kind (κάλλος αὐτοῦ ἄλλον τρόπον) and that whereas the individual Forms are beautiful and the Intelligible World has κάλλος, it, the source of κάλλος, will be Beauty above Beauty (κάλλος ὑπὲρ κάλλος). As Plotinus specifically puts it, it cannot be κάλλος because that would make it a determined thing, a finite thing (οὐδὲν γὰρ ὅν τι κάλλος). It is rather the begetter (τὸ γεννῶν) of every finite beauty, the δύναμις of all that is beautiful. It is the maker of Beauty (καλλοποιόν): this means that it is itself the 'flower of Beauty' (ἄνθος τοῦ κάλλους).[6]

Plotinus is never unwilling to be repetitive, and the opening of section 33 gives us the same lesson again. Beauty must be separated from all notion of shape, even intellectual shape, by which, as he says, we distinguish Justice and Temperance.

Hence we find the apparently paradoxical description of the source of Beauty as an ἄμορφον εἶδος. There is no point in repeating the descriptions of Plotinus in further detail. Suffice it to say that in line 21 he concludes that the First must be ἀνείδεον. It is καλλονή, and this καλλονή is simply the nature (φύσις) of the intelligible Good.

If we put together all that has appeared so far, it will certainly be clear that the Intelligible World is a world of Forms that are beautiful (καλά). Each Form may be described as καλόν and the World itself may be described as καλόν. But καλόν means καλόν τι, and since Forms are individualized and different (6.7.33.7), their Beauty must derive from something superior to their distinctions. This is the One, which may be called καλλονή, κάλλος ὑπὲρ κάλλος, ἀμήχανον κάλλος, ἀρχὴ τοῦ καλοῦ, πρῶτον καλόν. We have seen that we may describe the Forms as καλά. Would Plotinus simply allow us to say, without reservation, that the One is καλόν, meaning καλόν τι? The answer must of course be No. If he says that the One is καλόν, as in 1.6.7, he must mean, as we have specifically seen in this passage, not that it is a beautiful thing among beautiful things, but that if we say it is a beautiful thing there are no other beautiful things. The truth is that Plotinus does not look on the One as a beautiful *object* at all. The Forms are looked on as beautiful *objects*; the One is to be seen as the source of their existence and therefore of their Beauty. The Beauty of the One is that unique Beauty which is the power to create beautiful Beings (δύναμις τοῦ καλοῦ, 6.7.33.30).

Armstrong has remarked that among the many 'links' between the 'positive' and 'negative' ways in which Plotinus considers the One, the most important is the notion of the One as the principle of Measure.[7] 'Plotinus always admits', he continues, 'that the unit or standard of measure, the formal principle that produces good or truth is always other than, above and outside, that which it produces, measures or limits.' He cites as an example of this the phrase ἡ ποσότης αὐτὴ οὐ

ποσόν of 2.4.9.5. In this chapter, as I have remarked elsewhere,[8] Plotinus is concerned to show not only that Quantity, which is a Form, is neither material nor extended, but also that it is not self-predicating. Yet I also pointed out that other Plotinian Forms, for example Truth, *are* self-predicating. At 5.5.2.23, for example, after remarking that the real Truth is not in accordance with anything external but with itself, Plotinus concludes that there is nothing truer than the truth. This can only mean that in a sense Truth is true and that all the particulars which we normally speak of as true can only strictly be said to partake of truth.

What then are we to make of this? The Form of Quantity is not self-predicating; the Form of Truth is. It seems certain that the Form of Quantity could not be said to be a quantity because this would make it material. It is in relation to the many ποσά in the world of particulars that ποσότης is the measure. Presumably Plotinus could have said that ποσότης is ποσότης—if he had thought this worth saying.

If we return to Truth, Plotinus holds that the Truth is true and that individual acts may partake in the Truth. Thus the predicate 'true', when attributed to the Form Truth and to particular truths, has a different ontological significance. Now we have seen already that the Forms, obviously including the Form of Beauty, are beautiful, but we have also seen how the One can be called καλλονή, in so far as it is the source of Beauty the Form. We know too, of course, that the One is the source of the whole of the Intelligible World, including the Form of Truth, and thus by a similar analogy it could be said to be ἀλήθεια ὑπὲρ ἀλήθειαν or ἀμήχανος ἀλήθεια. And yet Plotinus has said, as we have seen, that nothing is truer than the Truth. How can we put all this together? The answer must be along the following lines. Particulars are true in so far as they partake of the Form of Truth; the Form of Truth is true (tautologously) in so far as it is *the* true thing; the One is true in so far as it is the cause of Truth. From this it will appear that the predicate 'true' could be applied to the One, the

Form of Truth and the particular truths, but that in each case the meaning would be different. The position with Beauty, as we have already implied, will be similar.

Why does Plotinus speak of the One as καλλονή? Why would it not be enough to call it the cause of Beauty? Is it too much to seek the answer to these questions in Plotinus' development of Plato's theories of causation? For Plato the Form of a thing is exactly what that thing is (αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό, *Phaedo* 100B). The Form of Beauty is Beauty itself (100C) and eminently beautiful. All other things which we call beautiful have their Beauty because of the Form of Beauty. But although Plato does not, as Parmenides in the dialogue named after him would have us suppose, make the Form a beautiful thing comparable with the beautiful particulars,[9] he is certainly of the opinion that it is Beauty itself, which must mean in some way that it is nothing but Beauty. It is true that Plato would hardly have denied, and presumably did not deny, that Beauty itself could be described in other terms as well as by being said to be beautiful, but this need not concern us here. The point is that since the Form of Beauty is before all else to be described as beautiful, it must be limited. The Forms are limited each to their own perfection. It is because they are determinate beings that they are what they are. We recall the rôle of πέρας and of μέτρον and of συμμετρία in the *Philebus*; we recall the apparently late Platonic understanding of the Good as the One. In all this we see the basic Platonic intuition that perfection and goodness involve limit and the application of limit.

So far as the Forms are concerned, Plotinus is in agreement with Plato. The opening of *Ennead* 6.9.1 is Πάντα τὰ ὄντα (i.e. the Forms) τῷ ἑνί ἐστιν ὄντα. This means both that the Forms are what they are because of the One and that this is so because of the unity which they have. Such unity of course derives from the One. It is then because the Form of Beauty is limited to being exactly what it is that it is beautiful. So in a sense nothing is beautiful except the Form Beauty. But, as we

saw Armstrong remark, the producer of something, the standard of measure, is always above its products. Hence the Form ποσότης is above, i.e. at a superior ontological level to, the particular ποσά. Similarly with the One and Beauty. There is only one Beauty, that is, the Form, but this Beauty is only Beauty because of its standard and its creator, the One. Hence just as ποσότης cannot be a ποσόν, the cause of Beauty cannot be καλόν. And yet it is related to τὸ καλόν in the way that ποσότης is related to a ποσόν. It can thus be thought of as an unlimited Beauty, a term which cannot admit of predication, even of self-predication in the Platonic-Plotinian sense.

We may now revert to our original problem. Is the distinction in Plotinus between καλλονή (the One) and τὸ καλόν (νοῦς) merely a juggling with words? The answer is now seen to be No. We can see that the One is a standard for the Forms, and thus differs sharply from the Forms themselves. It is the standard for Truth as well as Beauty, and therefore can presumably be said to be in a pre-eminent and unique sense Truth as well as Beauty. Indeed Plotinus could make the same kind of apparently ambiguous remark about any one of the Forms —and this may partly account for the growth of the myth of his pantheism.[10] The Forms are Beings. Plotinus could thus be imagined as saying that the One is all things, meaning that he is the cause of all things.

There is however a further problem to be solved. If Plotinus could in a sense say that the One is Beauty, since it is the cause of Beauty, why does he generally not do so? Why does he prefer to call it the Good? What does this tell us about the relations he sees between Goodness and Beauty? Here we must revert in particular to 5.5.12, where the antithesis of the Good and Beauty is most stressed. Beauty, we recall, is only available to the more sophisticated mind. Good is present to all, even when they are unconscious of it. The One then will be seen as the Good because Plotinus sees the Good as more universal than Beauty. Beauty is the product of the One in the same way that all the Goodness that we can know is, but its

scope is limited. When therefore Plotinus envisages that 'those who do not know' will choose Beauty rather than the Good, he must mean that they will substitute a lesser good for Goodness itself.

Hence although Plotinus' thought has been spoken of as a philosophy of Love and Beauty, he would have no time for aestheticism. That would simply be a choice of the lesser, limited good in place of Goodness itself. And in fact it would be in a sense even a choice of evil, for in metaphysical terms evil is simply a lack of good, a lack of determination.[11] Ultimate evil is the complete lack of good; lesser evils will be partial lack of good. And to choose Beauty over Goodness would thus be to choose something lacking the universality of Goodness and thus, relatively speaking, to choose the bad.

It is striking that Plotinus does *not* refer to the One as τὸ καλόν. Why should he do so, one might ask? The answer is simply that in Plato's *Symposium* τὸ καλόν is the end of the mystic's quest. Yet although, as we have seen, the *Symposium* is continually upon Plotinus' mind when he speaks of the ascent to the One, he still prefers to speak of his first principle as the One and the Good. This fact should be weighed carefully. A probable hypothesis is that since Plotinus does not conclude his account of the ascent, as does the *Symposium*, with τὸ καλόν, this must be deliberate. We are on very difficult ground here, but it seems that the facts warrant our saying that whatever Plato may have thought of the relation between τὸ καλόν in the *Symposium* and the Good, Plotinus was unwilling to regard the Beautiful, or even the One *in so far as* it is the Cause of Beauty, as the End. The procession of Beauty is but a part of the total procession from the One.

There is no doubt that Plotinus' doctrine of union with the One is very different from the vision of the Beautiful described in the *Symposium*.[12] Plato does not say in the *Republic* how he would envisage an approach to the Good, but the fact that he sees the Forms, for example in the *Phaedrus* (249 c), as objects always distinct even from the souls of the Gods, indi-

cates that he was not concerned with the Plotinian mystical union. The Gods are characterized by the Forms; they do not attain to union with them. And with this in mind we may conclude with a not unjustifiable speculation. Plotinus recognized that the vision of the *Symposium* was not the culmination of the philosopher's quest. Hence he did not treat τὸ καλόν as the τέλος. He supposed, however, that that quest would terminate with the attainment of the Good beyond Being of the sixth book of the *Republic*. Hence he does not call the One the Beautiful. And how could he detect a difference between the *Symposium* and the *Republic*? Simply by the fact that the Beautiful of the *Symposium* is apparently only to be seen as the cause of what is beautiful, while the Good of the *Republic* can be seen as the cause of the existence of all that is. Once again the difference between the Good and the Beautiful would be a question of universality. The Beautiful only makes things beautiful; the Good makes them what they are. Plotinus has again taken over a Platonic idea and elaborated it. The Forms exist. The Good is the cause of their existence and their Being. It is with such a Good that Plotinus, with his dynamic world, is primarily concerned. As to the nature of this Being, beyond which the Good is said to dwell, that has been discussed elsewhere.

6

EMANATION AND NECESSITY

At the end of a long and interesting article entitled 'La Liberté chez Plotin', Henry comes to the following conclusion about *Ennead* 6.8:[1] 'Si d'autres de ses ouvrages nous apprennent que l'Un engendre nécessairement le monde, nous ne pourrons, au nom de sa doctrine de la liberté divine, le déclarer exempt de panthéisme.' We are asked to accept that the problem of whether the One produced the world out of necessity is not a subject of *Ennead* 6.8. If therefore this doctrine appears elsewhere in the *Enneads*, we must, in Henry's opinion, admit that Plotinus' account of the divine will does not enable him to avoid the tendency to pantheism to which all believers in Providence are prone. In order to test these conclusions it will be necessary to re-examine parts of *Ennead* 6.8 in some detail; but before we can embark on that extremely difficult task it will be advisable to see what Plotinus has to say about emanation in other parts of his works.

Following Trouillard, I have suggested elsewhere[2] that a germ of the Plotinian doctrine of emanation is to be found in Plato's account of Eros and—as is more generally admitted—that this germ is supplemented by Plotinus' turning Plato's moral rule 'Being good means doing good' into a law of the cosmos.[3] The *philosophical* problem with which we are concerned here will be to determine exactly how this good is 'done' and what is the nature of the doer. It will therefore be necessary not only to examine the language Plotinus uses of the actual process of emanation, but also to enquire why the Good is what it is, for if we know why the Good is what it is, we shall also know why it does what it does. We shall not, of course, break Plotinus' own rules by separating the 'existence' of the One from its 'activity'. Rather we shall regard them as identical. Yet since the effect of the One's being what it is is

that the Second Hypostasis comes into being, we shall understand that generation only if we have more understanding of the One itself.

Armstrong has given what is perhaps the best traditional account of the way the emanation process takes place. He describes it as follows:[4] 'Νοῦς proceeds from the One (and Soul from Νοῦς) without in any way affecting its Source. There is no activity on the part of the One, still less any willing or planning or choice (planning and choice are excluded by Plotinus even on a much lower level when he comes to consider the forming and ruling of the material universe by Soul). There is simply a giving-out which leaves the Source unchanged and undiminished. But though this giving-out is necessary, in the sense that it cannot be conceived as not happening or as happening otherwise, it is also entirely spontaneous: there is no room for any sort of binding or constraint, internal or external, in Plotinus' thought about the One.' Now it is clear that there could be no external constraint, for what could there be to constrain the One, but how exactly are we to understand 'no internal constraint'? Armstrong seems to have been attempting part of an explanation when he wrote earlier[5] that 'the production of each lower stage of being from the higher is not the result of any conscious act on the part of the latter, but is a necessary, unconscious reflex of its primary activity of contemplation'.

We have already discussed the question of whether the One is conscious or unconscious, whether it has knowledge or not, and the results of that discussion may be assumed here.[6] We should now examine rather more closely the notion of a 'necessary reflex of contemplation'. The view underlying this would seem to be that the One contemplates, and that, as it were, an automatic by-product of this is the emanation of Νοῦς. The One has no control over such an emanation, indeed cannot help itself, contemplation being what it is. Our question is however: Why is contemplation what it is? And if 'necessary emanation' means 'emanation which could not

be imagined as happening in any other way', then we want to know why it could not happen in any other way. And if the One, as Plotinus so frequently says, is the power behind all things, then why does it make this thing happen in this way? It is clear that all these difficulties which face the traditional interpretation of the process of emanation arise because the commentators have not faced the problem whether the One is fully free in the sense of willing to be what it is, or whether it must be what it is because it could not be anything else.

It is time to turn to the texts themselves—and first of all to those texts which describe the fact of the emanation process without examining the nature of the cause of that process. It is well known that Plato's comparison of the Good to the Sun and his image of the Good as the light of the Intelligible World of Forms are basic sources of the emanation theory. It is also likely enough that Posidonius or other late Stoics supposed that the ruling principle in man (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) is some kind of emanation from the sun. Accordingly Plotinus uses the parallel of the sun and its light, or fire and its heat (and occasionally conversely snow and its coldness) to describe the procession of the Second Hypostasis from the One. At 5.1.6. 28ff. we read of a brightness encircling the Sun—a figure which represents the brightness of the Intelligible World around its source; and in explanation of this Plotinus goes on to say that all Beings, so long as they remain true to themselves, give off a 'necessary' (ἀναγκαίαν) kind of existence which is to their own nature as an image is to its pattern. Heat is such an image of fire and coldness of snow. We should notice here that Plotinus has actually employed the word 'necessary' for this emanation, and in terms of the similes he is using this is appropriate, for fire would hardly be what it is without giving off heat.

There is a very difficult passage in the latter part of Plotinus' short treatise on *Substance or Quality* (2.6.3.14ff.) which may shed further light on the significance of fire and heat. Plotinus seems to be saying that in the Intelligible World

heat has an intrinsic and formal connection with fire which it has with nothing else. In other things, that is, in warm objects, heat is merely a trace, a shadow and an image of its real nature, but in the Form of fire that real nature is not merely a quality but a Form and an activity which is essentially and necessarily associated with fire. It may well be suspected that behind Plotinus' arguments here, as well as in 5.1.6 of which we were treating just now, is a passage at the end of the *Phaedo* which Hackforth renders as follows:[7] 'Do you speak of "hot" and "cold"?' 'I do.' 'Meaning by them the same as "snow" and "fire"?' 'Why no, of course not.' 'That is to say, the hot is different from fire, and the cold from snow.' 'Yes.' 'But I think you would agree that what starts as snow cannot ever, as we were saying just now, admit the hot and still be what it was: still be snow and also hot; on the approach of the hot it will either withdraw or perish.' 'Quite so.' 'Again fire, when the cold approaches it, will either get out of its way or perish; it will never bring itself to admit coldness and still be what it was, still be fire and also cold.' The connection of these passages with Plotinus' view of the 'emanation' of heat from fire and thus ultimately of the hypostases of the intelligible universe each from an higher principle has apparently passed unnoticed. For our present purposes the point is, as Plato would have put it, that fire 'brings up' heat.

But the Form of fire brings it up, for Plotinus, in a way in which nothing else does. There is some kind of 'necessary' connection between the two, and it is that 'necessary' connection which we must bear in mind when we think of the importance and significance of this particular metaphor. Heat emanates from fire because fire is what it is. Our problem once again therefore is seen to be: What is the One that it emanates Νοῦς and Being?

We must now turn our attention to certain parts of 5.4. The subject of this treatise is precisely that appearance of what Plotinus calls 'secondaries' from the unity of the One. The argument in the relevant part of section one is familiar,

though presented in a rather illogical form. Even lifeless objects give out something of themselves, says Plotinus (l. 30). Fire, for example, heats, and snow makes cold and drugs have an effect on other things. All things imitate the source to the extent of their capabilities. How then could it be that the One itself which is perfect could remain enclosed within itself as though it were grudging of itself or were powerless? On the contrary, the One too—and indeed *par excellence*—must be productive.

So far we are on familiar ground, but in the next section an important philosophical interpretation of this metaphorical language is offered. The passage in question, beginning at line 27, runs as follows: 'There is in everything the Act of the essence (ἐνέργεια τῆς οὐσίας) and the Act going out from the essence: the first Act is the thing itself in its realized identity, the second Act is an *inevitably* following outgo from the first, an emanation distinct from the thing itself (ἣν δεῖ παντὶ ἕπεσθαι ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἑτέραν οὖσαν αὐτοῦ). Thus even in fire there is the warmth comported by its essential nature and there is the warmth going instantaneously outward from that characterizing heat by the fact that the fire, remaining unchangeably fire, utters the Act native to its essential reality. So it is in the divine (the One) also: or rather we have there the earlier form of the double act: the divine remains in its own unchanging being, but from its perfection and from the act included in its nature there emanates the secondary or issuing act which attains to that Real Being as second to that which stands above all Being' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

Here then we have the formal account of the process of emanation. In everything that has any kind of Being—the One included—there can be distinguished an act by which, in so far as the thing is good, it is productive and imparts something of itself. Fire is supposed both to possess heat essentially and to impart it to other things: it thus exhibits the two kinds of act. It is to be noticed that in this chapter Plotinus does not warn us about introducing notions of duality into our views

of the One, but because we are not specifically warned of this danger there is no excuse for our overlooking it. We must recognize that no distinction of more than a purely abstract kind must be allowed to enter into the One. The act by which the One is what it is must be allowed to be identical and indistinguishable in fact from the act by which it does what it does. Thus once again our problem of why the One does what it does must reduce itself to the more fundamental problem of why the One is what it is. We can observe in the passages of 5.4 once again that the act deriving *from* the essence, the productive act, is called 'necessary'. We can see how in all other things than the One this is an adequate description, for to the question 'Why is it necessary?', one can always answer 'Because the thing in question is made that way by something above it'. But the One is inferior to nothing and is therefore not subject to extrinsic determination in the way that all other things are. This fact alone should make us recall that the language of emanation is metaphorical and that we cannot fully grasp the One's nature by employing it. There is an infinite gulf between the One and all things across which metaphors can only point vaguely. We should not expect exact descriptions from them—and it is obviously valuable to the student of Plotinus to point out precisely where their weaknesses lie. Here the major difficulty in the language is that Plotinus is trying to explain the action of what is self-caused (the One) by comparing it with what is caused by external factors—namely everything which is not the One.

We have observed already that in 5.4 the act of an essence must normally be distinguished from the act that arises from an essence. *Enneads* 5.3.12 and 1.7.1 will help us to understand the process of emanation from the One further. We learn from 1.7.1 that the One, like the sun, is the centre from which light streams forth. But although the sun is the cause of its own light, and, as we know from many other passages in the *Enneads*, although it is in a sense transcendent, yet it is not to be thought of as wholly cut off from its effects. Indeed its

effects are the mark of its presence. The last lines of 1.7.1 are as follows: 'The sun is everywhere present with its light and is not cut off from it (οὐκ ἀποτέτμηται). And if you try and cut the light off from the sun, you will not be able to, for the light always is related to the sun.' What is this but a suggestion that the act *from* the essence is intrinsically bound to the act *of* the essence? What it is that causes the act *from* the essence (light or the intelligible world, as the case may be) is none other than the act *of* the essence.

The comparable passage of 5.3.12, which is perhaps even more illuminating, runs as follows (from line 39): 'The only reasonable explanation of act flowing from it lies in the analogy of light from a sun. The entire intellectual order may be figured as a kind of light with the One in repose at its summit as its king: but this manifestation is not cast out from it—that would cause us to postulate another light before the light—but the One shines eternally, resting upon the Intellectual Realm; this, not identical with its source, is not yet severed from it [notice ἀποτέτμηται again!] nor of so remote a nature as to be less than Real-Being; it is no blind thing, but is seeing, self-knowing, the primal knower' (trans. MacKenna-Page). What is to be noticed here is the insistence again on the connection of the One with its effects. If this were not so, runs the argument, there would be another light before the light. What is meant is that, at least in the case of the One, and of the sun its image, we must not separate the light of the essence from the light of the effects. True the effects are not the One itself—they are the Intelligible World—but they are not cut off from the One itself, for, if they were, the light of the Intelligible World would be caused by a quite different light. Rather the existence of the One is felt in the Intelligible World. In other words the effects feel the continual and illuminating presence of the cause. It is the cause which holds the effects together—and it does so because it is what it is. Once again we are brought to asking ourselves why it is what it is.

The last passage which need be introduced here to demon-

strate the relevance of analogies from the sun and light is the opening of 5.1.7. 'We have learned', says Plotinus, 'that Νοῦς is an image first because there is a certain necessity (δεῖ πως) that the One should produce something which should preserve much of its character and be a likeness of itself, just as light preserves much of the character of the sun.' The use of the word δεῖ is important here, and we should observe how it is qualified by πως. We have met the 'necessity' of emanation before and concluded that we do not yet know the reason for that necessity. This passage does not alter our conclusions. Here we must recognize some kind of necessity, but the use of πως should at least suggest that there is no question of any ordinary kind of compulsion involved. What compulsion makes light share some of the characteristics of the sun? The compulsion is the nature of the sun itself; and the cause of that nature will need investigation before the problem of necessity can be tackled properly. Thus 5.1.7 reinforces our earlier conclusions.

Perhaps the most famous passage in the whole of the *Enneads* to deal with the procession of plurality from unity is to be found in 3.8.10. The chapter opens with the familiar description of the One as the power behind all things[8] and then proceeds to enquire how this power can best be understood. A pair of similes follow. The One is first compared with a spring which has no source outside itself, which gives waters to the rivers but always remains what it is in itself. Then we are invited to think of the life that spreads through a huge tree, while still remaining somehow fixed in its root (οἷον ἐν ῥίζῃ ἱδρυμένης). What goes out from the spring or from the root is an existent thing in its own right, yet it is still in some way bound to the source from which it arises. The life that courses through a tree depends on the existence and nature of the 'life' in the root and could not exist, let alone course through the tree, without it. To understand it therefore we need to understand the nature of the root itself.

We have already observed on several occasions that Plo-

tinus speaks in terms of *necessary* emanation and that we need to know why such emanation is necessary. Armstrong and others have exhibited nervousness on various occasions lest the answer that Plotinus gives to this question should convict the philosopher of turning his whole system on its head.[9] As Armstrong puts it, what Plotinus seems to do (against his better judgement, as it were) is to see 'the evolution from the One to the sense-world as an evolution from potency to act, a passage to greater fullness and extent of being'. This theory, which Armstrong calls a 'serious inconsistency', would seem to derive from the idea that we have already noticed, that the One is the power and potentiality of all things (δύναμις πάντων). Let us therefore present the recalcitrant passages and see whether these fears about Plotinus' consistency are justified. The texts are as follows:

(*a*) 4.8.6.1–3 'Something besides a unity there must be (εἴπερ οὖν δεῖ μὴ ἓν μόνον εἶναι) or all would be indiscernibly buried, shapeless within that unbroken whole. None of the real beings would exist if that unity remained at halt within itself. . . .'

(*b*) 4.8.6.12–13 'To this power we cannot impute any halt, any limit of jealous grudging; it must move for ever outward until the universe stands accomplished to the ultimate possibility.'[10]

(*c*) 2.9.3.8 'It is necessary (ἀνάγκη) that each thing should give of itself to another. If it did not, the Good would not be good nor the Νοῦς νοῦς nor Soul what it is.' (We should observe that ἀνάγκη is rejected at line 11.) It should be added that a similar problem is presented for Νοῦς in 5.9.6 and at 6.7.8.14.

As we have seen, this kind of language expresses an exaggerated version of the idea that the One is δύναμις πάντων, and Armstrong is doubtless right to see the effect of the Stoic σπερματικοὶ λόγοι. But does Plotinus give way to Stoicism more than he should? What does the 'must' mean in the statement 'Something besides a unity there *must* be or all would be shapeless', etc.? Plotinus is not in fact describing pressure on the One, but is simply trying to convince the reader. We know that all is not buried shapelessly; therefore we must grasp—by logical means—that the One has produced

what is other than itself. The same argument applies to 2.9. 3.8 and is indicated by the peculiar language of the passage itself. Plotinus remarks that if there were no emanations the Good would not be good nor the Noῦς νοῦς nor the Soul what it is (ἡ ψυχὴ μὴ τοῦτο). The last phrase—and in particular the word τοῦτο—indicates the method. We know what the soul is like. Since it is what it is, its causes must be such as we suppose them to be, and emanation therefore must be a fact. Again the 'must' is a logical must.

The 'must' of 4.8.6.12–13 is similar. We know from Plato's *Timaeus* (42E5–6) and *Phaedrus* (247A) that the Gods, and for Plotinus *a fortiori* the One, can have no jealousy, can be in no way grudging of themselves, and since this is so, the infinite powers of the One must be translated into their appropriate effects, and the universe ordained 'to the ultimate possibility'. Once again the necessity that the possibilities will be realized is not an extrinsic necessity bringing pressure on the One. Rather it is a deduction made from the One's nature.

But what of the suggestion that these products of the One might be greater, more in act, than the One itself? There seems to be very little in the passages themselves to encourage such views. In the world below the One various effects of the One's power will be realized, but the very realization of them will simply confirm the One's superiority. The realization of a product of the One will entail its own delimitation, and the existence of the 'others' will entail their finitude. They will not be infinite in themselves or in their power, as the One is, and the measure of their powerlessness will be the measure of their inferiority. They will certainly not be a realization of the One's own nature, as some interpreters seem to assume erroneously on the basis, for example, of 2.9.3.8. For when they are realized they will be precisely not-the-One. This being so, it is absurd to interpret the phrase 'The Good would not be good if it did not give of itself to another', to mean that emanation fulfils the Good or brings it from potency to act,

or anything of that kind. Rather, as we have seen, the phrase means that it is part of the 'nature' of the Good as we understand it to cause this to happen. In fact, far from the One's being brought from potency to act by the emanation process, we should be well aware from other passages—and these allegedly recalcitrant ones can now be seen not to contradict this—that so far from the One's being fulfilled by the emanation process, it is totally unaffected by it.

We have not discussed all the passages dealing with emanation, but from the crucial ones we have examined it must be admitted that what Plotinus means by 'necessary' is not as easy to determine in the context of emanation as might appear at first sight. Indeed again and again it has become obvious that despite the pundits the problem of the necessity of emanation from the One must be reduced to the problem of why the One is what it is. For Plotinus the two propositions 'The One is what it is' and 'The One must be what it is' are in fact identical in meaning. And since the problem of emanation has to be seen in terms of the One's nature, we can only expect to find an answer to our question 'Why must the One be as it is?' if we know in advance whether and in what sense the One has free will. If emanation follows from the One's nature and the One's nature is caused by the One's will, then emanation will be an act of a kind of free will and Plotinus will be freed from the shackles of a deterministic universe.

The evidence from *Ennead* 6.8 has been handled in some detail by Henry and by Trouillard.[11] There is therefore no need to examine the whole of it, but only to summarize the main points. We shall then be able to decide whether Henry is right to conclude that 'sur la liberté de la création Plotin a donc gardé le silence',[12] or whether Trouillard's interpretation of the One's voluntarism brings us nearer the solution of our present problems.[13]

We recall from our earlier discussion that the act proceeding *from* the essence of the One—or indeed of anything else—is dependent and related to the act of that essence, and that for

our present purposes it is necessary to know *why* the One is as it is. One solution to this problem would be that the One acts 'according to its nature', but this is specifically ruled out in 6.8.7.50 and 6.8.8:15. The 'nature' of the One and its act as the One must be wholly indistinguishable. The term 'nature' (φύσις) can at best be referred only to the Intelligible World and possibly only to those things which exist in the world of time.

But if the One does not exist because of its own nature, it certainly does not exist by chance (κατὰ τύχην, 6.8.7.32) or by any kind of 'automatic action' (6.8.8.26). Nor in general can it be said that it 'happened to be' (συνέβη, 6.8.8.23). 'Happening to be' can only be meaningful in the context of plurality, for it implies the existence of some other factor than that which merely exists. Happening implies a relationship—and that is unintelligible in the context of the One. Plotinus is particularly energetic in ruling this suggestion out of court. He denies τὸ συνέβη as applicable to the One again at 6.8.11.35 (where, on the principles of negative theology, τὸ οὐ συνέβη is held to be more appropriate), at 6.8.14.36 (by implication), and at 6.8.16.18.

Nor of course can we say that the One is free to choose between contraries. Such a description would clearly be detrimental to its unity (6.8.8.1–11). The word αὐτεξούσιον is thus inappropriate, for the One does not choose between, for example, good and evil. Yet after taking this step are we to follow it up by thinking of the One as determined, as necessarily that which it is?

The first clear answer to this is to be found in 6.8.9.10–17. Plotinus has just been pointing out that the One is in a sense determined (ὡρισμένον) because it is different from its products. He proceeds as follows: 'It is therefore in a sense determined—determined, I mean, by its uniqueness and not in any sense of being under compulsion (ὅτι μοναχῶς καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἀνάγκης); compulsion did not co-exist with the Supreme, but has place only among secondaries and even there can

exercise no tyranny; this uniqueness is from outside. This then it is; this and no other; simply what it must be (ὅπερ ἐχρῆν εἶναι); it has not "happened" but is what by a *necessity prior to all necessities* it must be (τὸ δ' ἔδει τοῦτο ἀρχὴ τῶν ὅσα ἔδει). We cannot think of it as a chance existence; it is not what it chanced to be but what it must be—and yet without a "Must" (ὅπερ ἐχρῆν εἶναι, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ ὅπερ ἐχρῆν)' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

This passage teaches us much. The 'necessity' of the One's existence is different from other necessities. Indeed necessity is not really the right word for it. Compulsion (ἀνάγκη) too is an unsatisfactory word, because that would imply that the necessity is from something external to the essence of the One itself. Yet the chapter gives us a little more positive help as well as this string of rigorous negations, though even in lines 44ff., where a clue to the solution is offered, Plotinus, in his usual careful way, presents what is to form the basis of his answer so tentatively as to make one suppose at first glance that no answer will be forthcoming. Nevertheless it is here that for the first time in this *Ennead* he introduces the rôle of the will of the One. What he says is that the One is what it wills to be (οὖσαν ὃ θέλει), or rather that it flings out into existence what it wills, while remaining itself 'greater than all willing' and making willing a thing beneath it. He then qualifies this again, and in a most significant way. The One, he says, did not will itself to be 'such a thing (οὕτως) of the kind which would conform to what was willed'. The point of this statement will soon appear to be that the will of the One is not something which aims at an end, but the end itself. There is to be no distinction of any kind between the will and its accomplishment.

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 add little that is new except an interesting discussion of the notion of self-mastery (τὸ κύριον εἶναι αὑτοῦ). Probably following the pattern of Plato's discussion of a similar theme in the *Republic* (430E–431A), but applying the conclusions to the One, Plotinus indicates the

difficulties in saying that the One is master of itself. If anything can be said to be master of itself, he holds, it must be composed of a ruling and a subject part; and as this is intolerable in the One language which implies it will be inadequate.

In order to forward the enquiry, Plotinus now suggests that for the sake of persuasion (6.8.13.4) we must begin to use language of the One which is not strictly appropriate. The difficulty confronting the reader of Plotinus at this point is to know exactly which language and how much of the chapter Plotinus is meaning to tell us is only an approximation. After the initial *caveat*, we are introduced to the notion that (for the sake of explanation) we may assume activity in the One, and that such activity in some way (οἷον) depends on will (βούλησις). In fact the will of the One and its essence (οὐσία) are identical. Now we recall that when earlier in the *Ennead* the notion of will was introduced Plotinus insisted that in a sense the One was higher than will, and that will came from it. And now in 6.8.13 we are speaking the language of persuasion rather than of strict reasoning—and will has come up again. What we want to discover is what Plotinus is trying to say about will. One thing is certain: the distinction between the One's activity and its will on which such activity depends is 'for the sake of persuasion'. No such distinction is possible in reality. We cannot speak of the One's being activated by its will, for it is fully active already. Nor is the reference to the One's essence (οὐσία) appropriate except in a very special and unusual sense. Nevertheless if we say not that the One's will *is responsible* for its activity and that this kind of self-dependence is appropriate, but rather that the One's will *is* its act already and that this is the true and unique kind of mastery of itself which the One can have, may we not be nearer the truth?

In lines 47ff. of the same chapter we are again told that in speaking of the One we must be patient with language and must make use of the word οἷον ('as it were') in our descriptions. This raises the question of the accuracy of the termin-

ology employed between the first few sentences—which are clearly governed by the original *caveat* about language—and this new warning. It seems most likely that the second warning is a reminder, just in case we have forgotten the original, and even if it is a specific admonition on a new point, namely the use of οἷον, we should still be particularly careful about the treatment of the previous lines. Nevertheless these previous lines are important, and even if we cannot be certain how precisely they can be taken, we should still observe them carefully. MacKenna-Page translates lines 26ff. thus: 'What we must call its essence comports its will (σύνεστιν τῇ οἷον οὐσίᾳ ἡ θέλησις) to possess such a manner of being; we can form no idea of it without including in it the will towards itself as it is. It must be a consistent self willing its being and being what it wills; its will and itself must be one thing.' We must notice how Plotinus is trying in every possible way to bring the will and the 'being' together. This cannot be completely achieved —that is why language is inadequate—but at least the attempt can be made; and it is to be hoped that the reader will grasp the spirit rather than the letter. We should remember that this will is not the power of choice as we understand it, though as Henry[14] indicates it is parallel to the *real* as opposed to the apparent freedom of the human soul, for in Plotinus' view true freedom is a direction of the soul to its source in the One. For the One itself then there is no choice of opposites; the Good could not choose the bad. And in any case there is nothing to choose, for the One is already δύναμις πάντων. There is, as Plotinus says in line 40, nothing outside itself to which it could be attracted. In brief therefore we may accept as a hypothesis that what Plotinus is trying to say in chapter 13—but what he finds easier to express in the language of persuasion than in that of reality—is that for the One the will is its own accomplishment and that to say that this will is determined simply because it is already all-embracing and that there is nothing outside itself is like claiming that a man has no free will because he already exists. For in a sense the

only alternative to the One is nothingness. We can therefore proceed to see whether this version of the One's will is maintained in those remaining chapters of the *Ennead* where it is discussed, and in particular in chapters 19ff., for the way of persuasion seems to end at 6.8.18.53. If there is a sharp change of idea after this, however, our hypothesis will have to be discarded.

Our first indication is the latter part of chapter 14. Here, after repeating once more the now familiar doctrine that the One is wholly unconcerned and unaffected by chance, Plotinus tells us that he is cause of himself καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτόν. He is in fact primarily and transcendently his own self (πρώτως αὐτὸς καὶ ὑπερόντως αὐτός). We see the same pattern emerging in all this. No distinction can be made in the One's selfhood. He is his own cause because he could not be caused by anything else. And the wording here should be emphasized. It should not be said that the One *causes* himself (which might imply a causing and a caused, a will and a willed) but that he *is* his own cause. We should not therefore be at all surprised to find in the next chapter (6.8.15.9) that he is master of himself in the specific and particular sense that he 'made himself' not as something else wished (for what else could there be?) but as he himself wishes (for how else could he wish?).

Chapter 16 contains the same ideas with little further explanation. In line 17 the One is not as he happened to be but as he acts himself into being (ἀλλ' ὡς ἐνεργεῖ αὐτός); in line 23 he is not by chance (ὡς ἔτυχεν) but as he wills—we should notice the very frequent application of the present tense to the One, to mark its continuity; finally, after finding the One described as an awakening without an awakener, we revert to the now familiar conclusion that he is as he willed to be, not as he happened to be (l. 39).

We are beginning to realize that the 'nature' of the One is to be seen as its will, a will of such a kind as to be simultaneously both will and the achievement of will. Chapter 18 gives

us a further indication of the effect of this will. We recall from earlier in the discussion that the act *of* a thing has to be distinguished from the act *from* it. We saw too that emanation is 'necessary' because the One is as it is. Now, however, that we see that the One is as it is because it wills to be so, we realize that emanation is necessary because the One wills it to be so. Hence Plotinus can write in 6.8.18.41 that it is author not of the chance-made but of what the divine willed (γεννητικὸν τοῦ οὐχ ὡς ἔτυχεν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἠθέλησεν αὐτός). Here perhaps he comes as near as he ever comes to drawing the formal conclusion of his theorizings about emanation, namely that since emanation is necessary because of the act of the One itself and since the One itself acts as it wills, therefore the products of the One, as well as the One itself, are the products of will.

Chapter 18—the last, as we noticed, of the chapters in which inadequate language is to be employed of the One 'for the sake of persuasion'—ends with an interesting explanation of some Platonic terminology. One of the terms discussed is δέον ('it is necessary'), and Plotinus remarks that Plato used this word of the One because he wanted something diametrically opposed to 'chance'. 'Necessary' is not to be contrasted with 'free' but with 'by chance'. Hence the One can be said to will what is necessary, and what is necessary cannot be distinguished from the accomplishment of that necessity (εἴπερ τὰ δέοντα βούλεται καὶ ἓν τὸ δέον καὶ ἡ τοῦ δέοντος ἐνέργεια).

By chapter 21 we are well clear of terminology used for the sake of persuasion. Yet it turns out that the positions we noticed in the earlier chapters are confirmed, at least as regards the problem of will. Πρῶτον ἄρα ἡ βούλησις αὐτός, writes Plotinus in line 16. The One therefore, he continues, is such as he willed and of the kind that he willed. Yet this willing did not precede its products: rather it was contemporaneous with them, and in fact is them. Hence, as Trouillard has so rightly insisted,[15] the One is seen, even here where Plotinus is dealing strictly, so far as he can, in voluntarist terms. We cannot in

fact elude the conclusion that *Ennead* 6.8 answers our question about why the One is as it is. It is because it has willed to be so. Necessity is in fact the One's own will which by its very act is its own accomplishment.

We are now in a position to consider the conclusion of Henry that in 6.8 Plotinus never alludes, even vaguely, to 'free creation'. We shall recall that there is in fact an allusion in chapter 18 to the One as γεννητικόν of what it wills—which would seem to refer to the emanation process. But more important than this is the general result of this enquiry that the One itself is as it wills to be, because we now know that emanation follows 'of necessity' because of the nature of the One. Since, however, the One as an emanating being is itself in a sense the product of its own will, we must conclude that the One's willing of its own nature is the direct cause of the emanation from that nature. We are thus in a better position to understand remarks such as that at 5.1.6.25ff. that the One neither asserted (προσνεύσαντος) nor willed (βουληθέντος) nor was moved in any way towards the existence of a second hypostasis. The One does not concern itself directly with the second hypostasis; it concerns itself with itself. But the *result* of willing itself is its production of the second hypostasis, for it wills itself to be such as to produce it. Creation is as free, no more and no less, than the One itself. As for pantheism it is irrelevant.

7

LOGOS

Logos is perhaps the most difficult term in Greek philosophy. Everyone knows the opening words of St John's Gospel: 'In the beginning was the *Logos*.' Students of the ancient world recall Heraclitus asking his hearers not to listen to him but to the *logos*,[1] and when they meet the term in Plotinus they sometimes find it impossible not to be struck by the resemblance to the *Logos* of Philo.[2] But such comparisons and the associated meanings they bring with them can often be more misleading than the reverse, and sometimes they involve a host of embarrassing questions. Such questions would be: 'Did Plotinus read Philo?, Had he ever heard of Philo?, Who did read Philo other than Jews and Christians?' 'But Plotinus read Numenius[3] and found Philonic ideas there.' Yet there is no trace of the Philonic *Logos* in what we know of Numenius. When we are dealing with the term *logos* in Plotinus, therefore, we shall do well to disregard the *logoi* of others until we can discover, from the text of the *Enneads* themselves, exactly what Plotinus' own views were.

It has sometimes been said that a *logos* in Plotinus is the representative of a superior kind of reality at a lower level. Thus Νοῦς would be the *logos* of the One and Soul the *logos* of Νοῦς. I have however found only two passages which state this principle: 5.1.6.48ff. and 6.4.11.16. In the former the translation is not absolutely certain. We read as follows: οἷον καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ λόγος νοῦ καὶ ἐνέργεια τις, ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ἐκείνου. It is preferable to follow the majority of scholars in supposing that Plotinus is saying that just as Soul is in some way a *logos* and activity of Νοῦς, so Νοῦς is a *logos* and activity of the One; but it is just possible that Νοῦς is said to be not a *logos* of the One, but simply its activity. If, however, Plotinus is saying that Νοῦς is a *logos* of the One, there seems to be only

one parallel passage in the *Enneads*; and there is another which suggests that although the term might be used carelessly in this way, yet strictly speaking not Νοῦς but only Soul can be regarded as a *logos*. If the One were a Form, says Plotinus,[4] then Νοῦς could be called a *logos*; since the One is not limited by form, but is the creator of form, then, we are to understand, Νοῦς cannot be a *logos*. And the only possible conclusion from this passage must be that a *logos* is the representative of something determinate and informed. It must be not the representative of the One, but only the representative of Νοῦς. It must be connected first and foremost, as at 5.1.3.13, with the representation of the Forms at the next level of reality, the level of Soul.

This being the case, it is necessary to enquire in general terms at this stage how Plotinus understands the nature and functions of Soul. We know that there is a Soul of the world and that there are particular souls, and that in some sense the existence of the one implies the existence of the others. Of this Soul or souls there are, as all commentators agree, two parts. One part is engaged in eternal contemplation of its priors;[5] the other has 'come down' and created the world of material objects and particulars. The part which always remains 'above' in the Intelligible World[6] will not be recognized by us unless we have attuned the *whole* of our soul to live in accordance with it. We have activities of that part of the soul which are normally unknown to us, just as we have perpetual (but unconscious) desires which are only brought to the surface when we grasp them, as Plotinus puts it (4.8.8.10–11), by our faculty of sense or our faculty of reason or both.

Now we have seen that soul has been described as a *logos* of Νοῦς. Our next task therefore is to see exactly what this means. *Logos* in the passage of 5.1.6 is associated with 'activity', and the natural sense of that passage would be that the term *logos* is to be understood of that part of the soul which does not remain at the level of Νοῦς and in contemplation of Νοῦς but carries the Forms, as Reason-Principles (λόγοι),[7] into

matter, and thus differentiates matter in accordance with the individual Forms. We should expect therefore that the term *logos* would be applied to the power, originally derived from Νοῦς, by which the World Soul imparts its order to material objects. We should see that such a *logos* would be parallel to the *Logos* of Philo in that it organizes the world, but different in that it is not a hypostasis or level of reality in its own right. It would be an aspect of soul, to be understood, like soul in general, in terms of its origins in the Intelligible World, but also acting as a link between that world and material objects. If that is true, there would be no reason to think of it as an hypostasis in its own right.

But before we can go on to document this position from the *Enneads* themselves, a preliminary difficulty must be faced. If we say that there is a part of our soul that is perpetually 'above', how are we justified in calling such a part soul at all? Is not this superior part of us really a part of Νοῦς? Is this not what Plotinus means when he tells us, for example, that each of us is an intelligible world (ἐσμὲν ἕκαστος κόσμος νοητός)?[8] Does Plotinus not mean that the human being has within himself a part of the world of Forms?

It might be suggested that some such idea as this was what lay behind Plotinus' attitude to Forms of individual living things in *Ennead* 5.7.[9] Indeed Cherniss[10] has stated that 'the "individuals" for which Plotinus posits ideas are not the particular phenomena but only living organisms, and these "ideas of individuals" are simply the individual *souls* (*Enn.* 5.7: ἢ εἰ μὲν ἀεὶ Σωκράτης καὶ ψυχὴ Σωκράτους ἔσται αὐτοσωκράτης ὡς λέγεται ἐκεῖ, καθ' ὃ ἡ ψυχὴ καθέκαστα καὶ ἐκεῖ)'. What Cherniss seems to mean by this is that the eternal part of Socrates' soul must be identified with the Form of Socrates (αὐτοσωκράτης). It is a part of Cherniss' purpose to compare this supposed attitude of Plotinus with Aristotle's double use of the word εἶδος to refer to both form and soul, but the comparison leads to a very strange interpretation of Plotinus. If Cherniss is right, Plotinus has in fact so far blurred his distinc-

tion between Soul and Noῦς as to make it worthless. Cherniss' argument would seem to be that whatever is immortal, such as the soul of Socrates, or at any rate its highest part, must be a Form. Hence the soul of Socrates (the highest part?) will be the Form of Socrates. There are however a number of objections to this. In 4.7.14, for example, we are told that when man's *tripartite* soul is separated from the body at death, not only will the highest part have the possibility of being detached from the two lower—which are specifically associated with terrestrial existence—but even the lower parts will not perish, since their source will not pass away.[11] We are presumably to understand that they will be put to other purposes in the cosmos. The point is therefore that immortality of some kind is the mark not only of Noῦς but of the products of Noῦς. Hence there is no reason to suppose that the soul of Socrates, if immortal, is identified with his Form.

What then does Plotinus mean when he says that each of us is an Intelligible World? We should immediately be aware of the strangeness of this statement. It is true that the whole man is able to contemplate the Forms and thus, momentarily, to be identified with them; but the whole man has other functions than contemplation in the hierarchy of being—functions which Noῦς has not. Hence it would be no more true to say, 'We are each of us an Intelligible World', than it would be to say, 'We are each of us not an Intelligible World' (cf. 5.3.3. 31). Similarly, since union with the One is within the range of every man's possibilities, we might say, 'Each of us is one with the One'. In itself, of course, this statement would be quite misleading as well as true. We should have to add, 'Each of us is not one with the One'. In fact, the explanation of 'Each of us is an Intelligible World' is quite simple. The idea is as much Aristotelian as Platonic and must be understood in terms of its Aristotelian roots. As Theiler has pointed out,[12] the notion of thinking of ourselves in terms of our 'dominant' part is fairly common in Aristotle. Plotinus has taken it over and for him 'dominant' would mean 'superior in the hier-

archy of reality'. Thus to say that each of us is an Intelligible World would mean that our souls are produced and governed by Νοῦς and are able to maintain contact with their source. It does not mean, as Cherniss' account of Ideas of individuals would require it to mean, that since our higher soul is simply a Form, Plotinus could do without the hypostasis of soul altogether, and content himself with speaking of Νοῦς and its λόγοι in the material world.

There are a few further remarks to be made. We have suggested that the highest aspect of our souls, the part which contemplates the Forms and does not descend, is still to be regarded as soul and not as Νοῦς, nor even as the 'Form of an individual'. But it might be objected that since to contemplate the world of Forms is the prerogative of the hypostasis of Νοῦς and since indeed Νοῦς is *identical* with its objects, then how can the highest soul *not* be a Form? A first response—perhaps merely *ad hominem*—would be: Does Plotinus then make the World Soul a Form? Is it identical with the Form of Living Creature? Why then does Plotinus call it a Soul? Why does Plotinus bracket Νοῦς and 'pure soul' together, though apparently as separate entities, at, for example, 3.3.5.17? Above all, perhaps, what is the meaning of the suggestion at 2.9.1.31 ff. that *logos* from Νοῦς makes Soul intellective (ψυχὴν νοερὰν ποιῶν)? Could the solution be that although in the realm of Forms the hypostasis itself and all its parts are both intellective powers and the objects of knowledge in themselves, yet Soul in itself is only intellective and not, at least in the same sense, an *object* of intellection (νοερόν but not νοητόν)? For indeed only the individual could know his own soul (cf. γνῶθι σεαυτόν), but the Forms must be the common objects of knowledge present to everything that has the power of knowing.

What we are suggesting therefore is that there is an intellective power present at the level of Soul. In this respect Soul and Νοῦς are alike. Νοῦς however comprises the World of intelligible objects, which Soul does not; Soul on the other

hand has its own sphere of operation and emanation, different from that of Νοῦς and essential in the nature of things.

Perhaps the passage which makes the intellective rôle of Soul, in this case the World Soul, clearest is 4.8.8.14 ff. Here Plotinus tells us that the World Soul has no power of discursive reason (λογισμός) as we have, but that it acts by purely intellective means in its administration of the cosmos (τὸ ὅλον κοσμεῖ ὑπερέχουσα ἀπόνως, ὅτι μηδ' ἐκ λογισμοῦ, ὡς ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ νῷ). So it is not only the second Hypostasis, that of the Divine Mind, which has some kind of power of intellection. The World Soul, and, of course, the highest undescended aspect of our individual souls, have it too. Such soul 'remains', as Plotinus puts it at 5.1.10.23, among the objects of intellection—which it is able to recognize for what they are. We should notice however that our view of 4.8.8.14 must be modified by the nearly contemporaneous 5.1.3, where in l. 13 we read that the soul has intellection, but that this intellection is discursive (ἐν λογισμοῖς). This looks at first a straight contradiction of 4.8, but the truth of the matter probably is that the higher soul is somehow intermediate between discursive reasoning and νοῦς. Its objects are the intelligibles, but it has to look *up* to them (i.e. to Νοῦς) rather than within itself as Νοῦς does. Nevertheless even in 5.1.3 Plotinus still calls the soul νοερά.

We are now in a position to consider what is perhaps the clearest passage in which Plotinus distinguishes the functions of Νοῦς and Soul: 4.8.3.21 ff. The task of the soul in its more rational aspect (the higher part) is intellection, but intellection is not the soul's only function. If it were, how could it be distinguished from Νοῦς? The fact is that the soul is, as has often been said, a 'bridge-being'. Its peculiar task as soul is *both* to grasp its prior hypostasis, the World of Forms, and, as Plotinus goes on to say in our passage, to look to itself and in looking also to see what comes after itself. When it has seen this, it arranges it and directs it and rules it. It acts, as we shall see later, as Providence. Here then is the distinction of essential soul from Νοῦς. Soul is *essentially* concerned not only with

contemplation but also with the creation and administration of the world of nature. In this it represents the upward and downward movement which is common to the whole of Plotinus' system. Νοῦς contemplates the One and creates Soul. Soul contemplates Νοῦς and creates matter. We can see therefore that although the part of the soul which remains above in contemplation might be called our true self, it is neither itself a form nor indeed could it exist without the world-ruling aspects of the soul which are below it. It is regarded as our true self in Aristotelian fashion according to the principle by which an object as a whole is named after its dominant and superior part.

Now that we have seen something of the activity and life of the hypostasis of Soul in general, we can return to the problem of Soul and the *logos* of Νοῦς. It should be clear by now that the undescended part of the soul—which remains 'above' in contemplation—can hardly be regarded as the *logos* of Νοῦς if *logos* means any kind of representative. Rather we should look for an understanding of *logos* in terms of the whole soul and its products.

At this point the question of Plotinus' consistency comes up. Armstrong has suggested that in the treatises on *Providence* (3.2 and 3.3) the treatment of *logos* shows 'a remarkable development' of Plotinus' thought.[13] It has long been recognized that these treatises are much influenced by Stoicism,[14] but Armstrong holds that Plotinus has committed himself to his source-material to such an extent that his general doctrine of the three hypostases of the One, Νοῦς and Soul is compromised. He tells us that 'this is the most extreme modification which the doctrine of the three hypostases ever undergoes in the *Enneads*. The *Logos* is a fourth hypostasis even more clearly than nature, and a hypostasis, moreover, whose own structure is complex.' *Logos*, continues Armstrong, takes the place of Soul as an intermediary between Νοῦς and the visible world. It is very closely tied to Νοῦς (without mention of Soul) at 3.2.2.15ff.; and at 3.2.16.13ff., although it is said to be a

shining out (ἔκλαμψις) from both Νοῦς and Soul, the connection with Νοῦς is important and Soul itself is said to be 'disposed in accordance with' Νοῦς when the *logos* is produced. Armstrong goes into further detail about the nature of this *logos*-hypostasis, as it appears to him to be, but as his evidence is largely drawn from parts of the *Enneads* other than the treatises on Providence it can hardly help to forward the case that the treatises offer a radically different view of the *logos*.

Armstrong however has further arguments about the treatises on Providence which we must consider.[15] The *Logos* is, he tells us, represented here as the sole intermediary between the 'higher and lower worlds'. It combines the functions of the higher soul—Armstrong seems to refer here to the regulative power which the soul has over the visible universe—and of the lower soul or nature, which has a unifying or life-giving force and which maintains the cosmos in existence.[16] Armstrong's view is therefore that the levels of reality below Νοῦς are Soul (which is undescended), and *Logos* (which is a product of Νοῦς and undescended soul together). As he himself puts it: 'Soul has withdrawn entirely to the higher world, to the realm of Νοῦς, there presumably to engage in its primary activity of contemplation. Its *secondary* activity [my italics] of generating and governing the sense-world has been taken over by the *Logos*. The two, of course, though distinct, are not for Plotinus separate. The *Logos* is of the nature of soul.[17] They are, however, to be distinguished as clearly as soul and nature in the earlier treatises, though the *Logos* cannot, as we have seen, be correlated with nature or the lower soul.'

The problem which faces us at this stage is to determine whether anything Plotinus says about *logos* in the treatises on Providence is inconsistent with what he says about Soul elsewhere. We shall recall of course that we have already observed that Soul has two functions, one, that of its undescended part, of pure contemplation, and the other concerned with the direction of the visible universe. Our first inclination would be to say that this latter function is what Plotinus calls *logos* in the

treatises on Providence. Before considering this, however, we must investigate the relationship of soul and nature, for these too Armstrong tends to see as *separate* hypostases.

Armstrong's view is that we should take a passage of 5.2.1 in a rigorously literal fashion.[18] When Soul gets down to the level of plants, it produces another hypostasis, says Plotinus (ὑπόστασιν ἄλλην ποιησαμένη). This 'hypostasis' is of course nature. Armstrong is aware that such a fourth hypostasis is precisely what Plotinus denies in 2.9.1 and 2.9.2, but tends to explain away the emphasis there on only three levels of reality as a strong protest against the absurd Gnostic proliferation of hypostases. But what would be the point of Plotinus' protesting that there are only three levels of reality if a Gnostic could quote from Plotinus himself that there are four? Armstrong claims that in 5.2.1 the process by which nature is produced from Soul is exactly that by which any one Plotinian hypostasis normally proceeds from another. Yet the process in 5.2.1 is *not* in fact of such a kind. In 5.2.1 the new 'hypostasis' nature is not produced, as is the normal Plotinian hypostasis, as the result of the contemplation by a being of its prior, but by its desire for what is inferior to itself. It is normal Plotinian doctrine that Νοῦς in contemplation of the One produces Soul. Yet according to 5.2.1 Soul in desire for its inferior (προόδῳ καὶ προθυμίᾳ τοῦ χείρονος) produces nature. Nature is thus not produced in the manner natural for a Plotinian hypostasis. Hence we may well doubt in what sense it is an hypostasis at all. The mere use of the word ὑπόστασις proves nothing. Plotinus is hardly rigorous in his use even of his most technical terms. The fact is that were the *word* ὑπόστασις not present in 5.2.1 the account of the appearance of nature would differ little from the normal Plotinian account of it as an aspect of the soul. We should compare the remark in 2.9.2 that trouble (πάθος) comes to the soul when it leaves the realm of Beauty with the picture in 5.2.1.18 of the soul both as being fulfilled by looking up to Νοῦς and remaining static in contemplation, and also as taking on movement and producing—

what? Not an hypostasis, but an image (εἴδωλον). And that image is nature.

There is a further textual point before we leave 5.2.1, which, though not certain enough to settle the matter by itself, is to my mind convincing and may certainly be used as additional confirmation once the general tenor of the chapter is clear. Henry and Schwyzer print in line 23 καὶ δοκεῖ καὶ ἡ ἄνω ψυχὴ μέχρι φυτῶν φθάνειν. This ἄνω is an emendation of Harder's for the ἀνθρώπου of the manuscripts, and, as Henry and Schwyzer indicate, ἄνω could easily be corrupted into the standard scribal abbreviation of ἀνθρώπου. Now if ἄνω is correct—and it certainly makes good sense—Plotinus is speaking here in his customary manner of the upper part of the soul, the undescended part, and comparing it with the lower part that organizes matter. Thus we should have two parts of the soul, the 'upper' soul and the 'hypostasis' of nature (produced in its peculiar way), and the chapter would once again seem perfectly in accord with Plotinus' normal views on the nature and aspects of the soul.

Armstrong has offered another piece of evidence about nature. In 2.3.9, he points out, we find a distinction between θεός and δαίμων. Θεός, Armstrong believes, represents the soul; δαίμων represents nature. The distinction of hypostases is thus in his view further emphasized. But a recollection of the rôle of δαίμονες in the *Symposium* should set this right. Δαίμονες link the visible world with the divine, yet they are indeed immortal, though inferior to the Gods. But nobody denies that the lower phase of soul (nature) is inferior to the higher. In view of these difficulties therefore we must conclude that Armstrong's verdict that the 'lower soul' really stands in much the same relation to the higher as Soul to Noῦς is unproven. Since Armstrong's case fails to stand up to scrutiny, we should do better to rely on Plotinus' own words (e.g. in 2.9.1) and maintain three and only three hypostases—at least as far as nature is concerned.

Having cleared the difficulties about nature from the path,

we can return to the question of *logos*. The crux of Armstrong's case is that the *logos* of the treatises on Providence '*combines* [my italics] the functions of the two universal soul-hypostases of the earlier treatises, the higher-soul and nature. The *logos* is in direct contact with matter. The division between the higher and lower phases of universal-soul is represented by a division between a higher and lower *Logos* or Pronoia (3.3.4).'[19] What we must do therefore is examine some of the uses of *logos* outside the treatises on Providence and compare them with the uses in these treatises themselves, and see if there are any significant differences. In the course of this examination we shall also be able to test Armstrong's opinion that nature in Plotinus is a 'unifying' and life-giving principle but that the *logos* of 3.2 and 3.3 possesses a regulative force as well.

Adapting Plato's *Phaedrus* (246 c 1–2) Plotinus tells us more than once that soul governs the world in accordance with *logos*.[20] In 4.3.9.30ff. we learn more about how this guidance takes place. The cosmos is compared to a large and varied house whose architect, while not descending to it, presides over it and looks after it from above (ἄνω γὰρ μένων ἐπιστατεῖ). This is clearly the undescended part of the soul acting as a providential force in the universe. The chapter then continues with a wonderful comparison of the world to a net cast out in the sea of the soul and then to a shadow 'as large as the *logos* proceeding from soul'. We are to gather from what follows that the *logos* is again thought of as a regulative principle (apart from the providential 'soul above') and furthermore that it is in a sense connected with Νοῦς as well as with the higher soul. What Plotinus says is that it 'is of scope to generate a cosmic bulk as vast as lay in the purposes of the Idea which it conveys'. *Logos*, then, 'conveys' the Forms into the particulars which it creates, thus giving them order as well as being. This is certainly what we should expect, for the hypostases cannot be separated and anything that is a part of soul as a whole—as is the *logos*—will possess marked characteristics of the cause of Soul, that is, of Νοῦς.

That *logos* has a marked connection with Νοῦς throughout the *Enneads* can be further demonstrated. A metaphorical account of its 'bursting into the garden of Soul' appears in part of the allegorization of Plato's story of the birth of *Eros* in 3.5.9: 'This means that the *logos*, upon the birth of Aphrodite, left the Intellectual for the Soul, breaking into the garden of Zeus. A garden is a place of beauty and a glory of wealth; all the loveliness that Zeus maintains takes its splendour from the *logos* within him; for all this beauty is the radiation of the Divine Intellect upon the Divine Soul, which it has penetrated.' A second example is to be found at 5.1.7.42 ff. Here again *logos* appears in an interesting situation. It seems to be identified with Soul. It has two aspects, an upper part which circles about Νοῦς and is called the trace and light of Νοῦς, and a lower which generates and is connected with the material world. *Logos* then is here a generic name for Soul in all its functions. Indeed it is actually called a product of Νοῦς (γέννημα) and an hypostasis.

There is no need to multiply examples of this type. Outside the treatises on Providence we may find *logos* used in somewhat varying ways, but always as some aspect of the Soul seen in terms not of its immediate derivation from Νοῦς but of its connection with the material world. Plotinus is no stickler for exact terminology, but *logos* tends to be used to refer to the soul especially when it is a matter of conveying the εἴδη of Νοῦς into material objects. If we are to distinguish it from nature at this stage, we should do so by saying that when Plotinus thinks of nature, he thinks (as Armstrong saw, despite his wish to make nature an hypostasis) of a power of Soul regarded as a power of no more than Soul; that is, he temporarily neglects the fact that Soul itself is a product and trace of Νοῦς.

We should now turn to the accounts of *logos* in the treatises on Providence themselves to see how they accord with what we have found in the rest of the *Enneads*. We shall notice in these chapters that the word nature occurs rarely[21]—an indi-

cation perhaps of the correctness of Armstrong's view that the functions of the lower soul have been taken over by the *logos*—but we need not take too much notice of differences of terminology, as we have said, unless differences of doctrine are also apparent. Νοῦς then produces *logos* at 3.2.2.15ff. (οὗτος δὲ ὁ λόγος ἐκ νοῦ ῥυείς); this is very similar to what we found at 5.1.7.42. Νοῦς is again closely identified with the production of *logos* at 3.2.16.10ff. Here we read that *logos* is neither pure νοῦς nor νοῦς by itself (αὐτονοῦς) nor the 'kind of pure soul',[22] but a sort of illumination (ἔκλαμψις) deriving from both νοῦς and soul disposed in accordance with νοῦς—by which Plotinus must mean the undescended part of the soul. Putting these passages together we see that Νοῦς is represented in the visible world by the *logos*. This *logos* does not, of course, descend directly from Νοῦς in such a way as to be dissociated completely from the undescended part of the soul. From this point of view we can bracket Νοῦς and this pure soul together and treat pure soul as an intermediary through which the Forms are transmitted unhindered to the visible world as *logoi* or the reason-principles inherent in material things. The chief significance of *logos* here then would seem to be that it is that outflow of the higher soul and of Νοῦς which is concerned with both the creation and the administration of the visible world—which is of course exactly what we saw it to be in other parts of the *Enneads*.

If we wish to see this *logos* as clearly as possible in these treatises, we can find the most detailed analysis of its functions in 3.3.4, which we must therefore examine at length. The passage is one of the most obscure in the whole of the *Enneads*—which means that some of it cannot be translated with any certainty—but at least it is clear that Providence in the widest sense is to be understood as the mere existence of the highest part of the Soul. From this descends a *logos* to the visible world and this *logos* can be understood in two aspects. One aspect is creative (ποιητικός) while the other, while connected with the first (συνημμένος ἐκείνῳ), should be thought of as linking

superiors to inferiors. In terms of the dynamic of Plotinus' system, this seems to mean that *logos* can be understood first as a creative force deriving providentially from the higher soul (and ultimately from Νοῦς), and secondly as the opposite force to the creative procession, namely the return of the emanated products to their source. This return, we would suspect, is what gives the products of emanation whatever form they have at this level, just as at a higher level the return of the Indefinite Dyad to the One shapes the clear-cut Forms of the Intelligible World.[23]

If therefore Armstrong is right, as he seems to be, in thinking that nature is a creative rather than a regulative force in the *Enneads* in general, we may conclude that it is to all intents and purposes here to be identified with one aspect of *logos*, namely the λόγος ποιητικός. But *logos* has another aspect too, and an aspect which is also peculiarly connected with Νοῦς, that is, an aspect which represents the power to turn back to one's source and in such turning to find one's own *order* in the universe.

So far we have shown that there is no real inconsistency between the account of *logos* in the treatises on Providence and that elsewhere in the *Enneads*, and that the *logos* of the treatises on Providence does not replace the Soul as an hypostasis mediating between Νοῦς and the visible world. Outside the treatises on Providence Soul is composed of two phases, of which the lower is concerned with the visible world. This phase is often called a *logos* and it represents Νοῦς in the visible world. In the treatises on Providence the same idea occurs. The *logos* is quite simply that power of Soul concerned with the visible world which can itself be seen in two aspects. The 'outflowing' creative aspect is what is normally called nature, though when Plotinus uses that term he prefers to think of products of Soul rather than to go back and refer Soul itself to its origins in the World of Forms. And since nature is concerned with the creation of the visible world rather than with its ordering, Providence is not associated with nature but with the *logos* in general.

This general position is confirmed in the extraordinary *Ennead* 3.8 on Contemplation. Plotinus begins (3.8.3.1) as follows: 'But if this Reason-Principle (nature) is an act—and produces by the process indicated—how can it have any part in Contemplation? To begin with, since in all its production it is stationary and intact, a Reason-Principle self-indwelling, it is in its own nature a Contemplative act. All doing must be guided by a *logos* and will therefore be distinct from *logos*: the Reason-Principle (λόγος) then, as accompanying and guiding the work, will be distinct from the work; not being action but Reason-Principle it is, necessarily, Contemplation. Taking the Reason-Principle, the *Logos* in all its phases, the lowest and last springs from a mental act (in the higher *Logos*) and is itself a contemplation, though only in the sense of being contemplated, but above it stands the total *Logos* with its two distinguishable phases, first, that identified not as Nature but as All-Soul, and, next, that operating in Nature and being itself the Nature-Principle' (trans. MacKenna-Page, slightly adapted).

If we recall that for Plotinus a lower level of reality is regarded as 'in' a higher, as Νοῦς is in the One, body in Soul and so on, this passage about the 'two distinguishable phases' of *logos* becomes clear. *Logos* in general is the offspring of Νοῦς through the undescended part of the soul: it descends to matter. Within this general *logos* is the phase which we call nature and which actually creates this material world. It was perhaps a little rash of Plotinus to distinguish even formally this out-going factor from its return to its source in the treatises on Providence, but we recall that even there the two are said to be 'connected'. It is in the light of this connection that we should view the 'shadowy contemplation', that is, the return to its source, which is allowed to nature in 3.8. And indeed this 'contemplation' is only what we should expect if nature is to create at all, for all creation derives from the contemplative process.

If then we are to conclude that there is little point in regard-

ing *logos* (or nature) as an hypostasis distinct from soul, what have we learned about the nature of reality in general according to Plotinus? What have the One, Νοῦς and Soul in common which *logos* (seen apart from Soul) and nature do not have? The answer is: The full power of contemplation. Only the One, Νοῦς and Soul can contemplate and only what can contemplate can be fully real. That is why the Soul is the lowest element of the 'real world' of Plotinus' philosophy. If we try to abstract elements out of Soul, like the *logos* or nature, we find that by themselves they can only dream of contemplation and that their products are the ever-changing unreal particulars. As we have seen, *logos* and nature are aspects or functions of Soul. If they were not what they are, as Plotinus himself says, then Soul would not be Soul, but Νοῦς. The apparent distinction of *logos* or nature from the general hypostasis Soul to which they belong is a mark of Soul's being itself not a One-Many (as is Νοῦς, the complex of mind and its object) but a One and Many, a third stage of progression away from the One. A fourth stage in this series could only be a Many without Unity at all, and this could only be the indefinite, unformed material base of the world, the last term in the procession from Unity to multiplicity.

Finally we may return to the question of whether the *logos*, as understood by Plotinus, bears the marks of previous thought. Armstrong finds it impossible not to be struck by the resemblance to the *logos* of Philo.[24] 'The Philonian *logos*, like that of Plotinus', he says, 'is the principle of unity-in-diversity, of the separation and uniting of contraries in the material world.' He adds, rightly, that so far the resemblance between the two philosophies could be explained by the indebtedness of both to Stoicism. He continues, however, by saying that what brings Plotinus in the treatises on Providence very close to Philo is the fact that '*logos* is, more than any other hypostasis (*sic*) in the *Enneads*, presented simply as an intermediary between the Divine and the material world... In the same way,' continues Armstrong, 'the *logos* of Philo is simply

an intermediary between God and the material creation.'[25] But *logos*, as we well know, is an extraordinarily ambiguous word in antiquity and Armstrong's account of it in Philo seems to leave too much out. The *logos* of Philo is, for example, the place of Forms,[26] that is, it is more like Plotinus' Νοῦς than his *logos*.

Let us compare the uses of *logos* in Philo and Plotinus a little further. Following the Stoics, Philo regularly distinguished a λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and a λόγος προφορικός.[27] For the Stoics these phrases meant 'reasoning in the soul' and 'uttered speech' respectively. Philo however often associates the former with the Intelligible World and the Ideas, and the latter with the visible world.[28] As an equivalent of προφορικός he often uses the word γεγωνός and he speaks of this λόγος as an 'interpreter' (ἑρμηνεύς).[29] Let us compare this record with that of Plotinus. Plotinus speaks of a λόγος γεγωνός at 5.1.6.9. Now this is very curious, since Philo seems to be the only other writer whose extant works contain this phrase—and he uses it fairly often. If von Arnim is any index of the Stoic evidence, the phrase was not used in the Old Stoa; nor does it appear in Marcus Aurelius. It must have been used by writers other than Philo, but Philo is the only pre-Plotinian writer I can find who has it. This fact, though not very significant in itself, should at least encourage us to look further. Plotinus, we then find, knows of the doctrine of the two *logoi* (ἐνδιάθετος and προφορικός). He makes use of this distinction in at least two places in the *Enneads*: 1.2.3.27 and 5.1.3.7.[30] What he says in these passages fits well together. In 1.2.3.27 λόγος ἐν φωνῇ (the equivalent of προφορικός) is an imitation (μίμημα) of λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ (=ἐνδιάθετος). Similarly λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ is an imitation and an interpreter (ἑρμηνεύς) of Νοῦς. In 5.1.3.7 the λόγος ἐν προφορᾷ is an image (εἰκών) of the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ (=ἐνδιάθετος) while the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ is an image of νοῦς. First we may notice a similarity with Philo. The word ἑρμηνεύς is used in discussing the two *logoi* in both Philo and Plotinus. But there is also a difference. In Philo it

is the λόγος προφορικός which is an 'interpreter' while in Plotinus this rôle is played by the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ (or ἐνδιάθετος). The fact of the matter is that Plotinus has not followed Philo in fixing the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος in the world of Forms. If Plotinus had followed Philo, this *logos* would have been his second hypostasis—which it is not. Like the Stoics, but unlike Philo, Plotinus has employed both *logoi* at the level of the World Soul.[31]

What then must our general conclusion be? The use of the word ἑρμηνεύς—in different ways—in the two authors can be given little weight. It is certainly curious that apart from Plotinus Philo is to my knowledge the only author to use γεγωνός in this technical sense, but the fact that the phrase cannot be traced does not mean that it was not used, and we can base little on it. We should notice that, as has been pointed out,[32] the *sense* of the distinction between προφορικός and ἐνδιάθετος—if not the actual words—goes back to Aristotle and Plato. It was then the most general possible commonplace, and since we lack further evidence we must regard the word γεγωνός simply as a curiosity. So far the evidence that Plotinus knew Philo is at best inconclusive.

And there are more general considerations. Who did read Philo in antiquity? As far as one can tell, the only people to do so were Jews and Christians or at least persons interested in Judaism.[33] Numenius *may* have read him; on *a priori* grounds at any rate Plotinus did not. And from what we know of Numenius' work, there is nothing to suggest that he took over anything which might introduce Plotinus to the Philonian *logos*.

Whatever slight similarities there are between Philo's *logos* and Plotinus' are almost certainly accidental. There is a good deal of Stoicism in Plotinus' conception; there are even echoes, *via* this Stoicism, of the *logos* of the world in Heraclitus, but in the main we shall be on safe ground if, until further evidence comes to light, we interpret Plotinus' *logos* out of Plotinus' text. The peculiar relation in the *Enneads* of Νοῦς, Soul, *logos*

and nature is not to be found—or even approximately found—in any earlier philosophy. If the connection of *logos* with Providence recalls the Stoics, the association with Νοῦς denies them. Whatever *logos* may mean to other ancient thinkers, it means to Plotinus that aspect of Soul which by transmitting the creative Forms creates, maintains and orders the visible world. And as Soul embraces all individual souls, so the *logos* embraces individual *logoi*.

8

THE SENSIBLE OBJECT

Dean Inge's view of Plotinus' doctrine of categories is hardly complimentary:[1] 'The long discussion of the Categories in the Sixth Ennead seems to me... the least interesting part of the whole book.' There is little doubt that the impression of dullness which often comes upon the reader when attempting this section of Plotinus' work is not least accountable to its difficulty. Those who know something of the history of ancient philosophy are aware that the whole critique of the Aristotelian categories is based on a long tradition of Stoic and Middle Platonic exegesis;[2] those medievally inclined point out that for all Plotinus' attack on Aristotle, his pupil Porphyry installed the Aristotelian logic as the groundwork of Neoplatonic metaphysics. Yet although no one can deny the difficulty and sometimes the tedium of this section of the *Enneads* it has considerable philosophical value. It appears to be the opinion of certain polemical interpreters that Plotinus' whole discussion is misguided[3]—and so it is if looked at solely from an Aristotelian point of view. For the fact is that Plotinus' critique of both the Aristotelian and the Stoic categories depends upon certain of his own thoroughly Platonic principles. And these principles need clarification not merely to show the presuppositions with which Plotinus approaches the Aristotelian categories but for their own sake, since in the sections of the *Enneads* devoted to the categories we find almost the only passages where Plotinus deals with the metaphysical status of the sensible object.

Since Aristotle's categories were intended to refer to σύνολα—composites of form and matter—we can hardly understand a criticism of them by Plotinus unless we know how he accounts for the sensible object himself. More than that, the problem is of intrinsic importance; obviously so.

Although a very large proportion of the *Enneads* themselves is devoted to the One, the Forms, the Soul or to problems of ethics, the philosophical student has the right to expect that somewhere in his writings Plotinus will give at least an indication of a theory of material objects. But let us be even more precise. We find many passages in Plotinus which deal with the material world in general terms: passages, for example, which tell us, against the Gnostics, that it is good, or which explain it as governed by Providence. But for all that we do not often find it clearly stated either by Plotinus or by his commentators exactly what each individual component of the material world is.

Plotinus is in some sense a Platonist, and this problem begins with Plato. It arises in connection with the fact that though particulars are ontologically 'unreal', that is, they belong to the world of becoming, not to the world of Being, and though this affiliation means that they are always changing, never exactly what they were, always in some kind of Heraclitean flux, yet they are nevertheless the subjects of apparently meaningful statements. 'Theaetetus is sitting' is a meaningful statement; 'Theaetetus is flying' is certainly false, possibly meaningless. How can such discrepancies arise and be explained in terms of the theory of Ideas, or of any other two-world theory? Such is the problem which Plato tries to solve, among others, in the *Sophist.*

It is not necessary to discuss Plato's solution here, but it is illuminating to observe that those who have attempted to do so have put their finger on the difficulties involved in Plato's treatment of the names of particular objects. Hamlyn explains what he thinks to have been Plato's answer to the problem of proper names as follows:[4] 'There are no proper names in our sense, but only names of forms. "Socrates" is, to use the more modern idiom of Russell, a disguised description, in that it unpacks into a list of all the forms in which Socrates partakes. The expression "Socrates" is only an abbreviation for "man who is good, wise, snub-nosed, etc.", and thus any

statement in which "Socrates" appears can be analysed, just because communion of forms is possible.' Hamlyn offers passages from the *Philebus* in support of his view,[5] but, as Moravcsik points out, these passages show at most that the description of an individual, not the individual itself, can be broken down into a finite number of Forms.[6] Moravcsik goes on to notice that *Theaetetus* 209 C 7 affords the best textual support for the 'decomposition theory'. Here it is suggested—though the view may possibly not be Plato's own—that snub-nosedness and the other relevant traits make up the individual (ἐξ ὧν εἶ σύ). On this Moravcsik remarks that here 'the individual is not conceived as composed of characteristics... but rather as the sum of unique qualities which pertain only to the subject itself'. Thus the *Theaetetus* passage would suggest that the particular can be unpacked not into Forms, but into separate and distinct qualities (doubtless themselves classifiable under Forms). Thus Socrates is not composed of transcendent Forms, but of immanent qualities,[7] these qualities dependent each on its Form, but varying according to the spatio-temporal situation of the individual of which they are a part. At any rate in some sense the individual can be thought of as a collection of qualities, and this collection can be regarded as a unity at least for the purposes of linguistic analysis.

Although such passages as *Theaetetus* 157 BC and *Timaeus* 49–50 emphasize the precarious nature of the unity of the sensible object, this unity is at least substantial enough to allow the possibility of statements about particulars and, especially in the *Philebus*, to allow Plato to speak of the *knowledge* of particulars.[8] Indeed even if no metaphysic of particulars *qua* particulars is possible, the very fact of human speech indicates that they must admit some kind of logic. Of course, the fact that particulars can be 'placed' in a logical framework in this way in no sense detracts from their complete dependence on the Forms which give them coherence—and may indeed lead to methodological errors in the enquirer. Plato observes in the *Seventh Letter* (343 C) that there is a difference between a

quality (τὸ ποιόν τι) and an essence (τὸ τί) and that when we try to understand the nature of a particular it is misleading and confusing to substitute the quality for the essence. Yet our natural tendency is to do this, for it is easy to recognize qualities while the essence or Form is hard to grasp.

Theaetetus 157BC had a considerable importance in spreading the notion that individuals were collections of particular qualities, even though a particular contextual reference was misapplied. Plato argues there that both particulars and collective names, such as man, stone, etc. (he does not mean the Forms), are not substances. The word 'collection' (ἄθροισμα) occurs in this passage, but Plato does not apply it to the particular.[9] He does not call the particular a 'collection' of unique qualities, even though, as we have seen, that is how he regarded it. Nevertheless the term was adapted in this way by later Platonists, probably by Antiochus of Ascalon, and certainly by Albinus.[10] Such then, in brief, was the background of the question when Plotinus wrote. We can now consider how he handled the material when faced with the quite different views of Aristotle.

Plotinus must have drawn confidence for his battle with the Aristotelian categories from the fact that it was apparent to his predecessors that Aristotle is in difficulties about the relationship between substance and quality in the sensible compound. It is not only in modern times that philosophers have found it hard to understand the difference between substantial and accidental qualities and wondered whether the qualities are piled upon substance like packages on the back of an elephant. In Plotinus' view this kind of difficulty arises because Aristotle persists in regarding a pseudo-substance, the particular, as a reality. To correct him one must explain that the only reality is in the world of Forms and that particulars can only admit the same predicates as Forms equivocally. What then can we do with particulars? The answer is to be found in parts of *Ennead* 6.3 to which we may now turn for the prosecution of more detailed enquiry.

We may take section two as our starting-point. In this section and the next Plotinus identifies three aspects of the particular: its matter, its form and its composite nature. These three are involved with its substance and must therefore have something in common (6.3.3.18). Their association enables us to speak of the particular by a common name. Aspects of the 'substance' may be identified apart from these; but these will enable us to form an idea of what it is. We must ask therefore, Plotinus repeats in 6.3.4.1, what they have in common, what is 'substantial' about them. A curious question, one might say, since the composite is itself in some sense a composite of form and matter, but this does not worry Plotinus. His point is not that these three are separable elements of the particular in some quasi-material sense, but that the particular can only be understood, can only be a logical subject, for example, if these factors are recognized to be present.

It is clear from the last sentences of this chapter that what the three elements have in common is simply that in some way they are combined into a unity and that this unity is meta-physical, not physical (μεθ' οὗ γάρ τι ἁπαρτίζει ἕν τι). Substance then in the physical world, or pseudo-substance as Plotinus often remembers to call it (τῆς ἐνθάδε οὐσίας λεγομένης, 6.3.5.1), is a kind of centre from which other categories derive and to which they owe their existence; it is a centre of the experience of the object and the source of its activity (περὶ ὃ τὸ πάσχειν καὶ ἀφ' ἧς τὸ ποιεῖν). It may be observed that in some respects such a description of sensible substance corresponds with the description of intelligible or real substances. Such correspondence is to be explained either by analogy or by the mere fact that terms are of necessity used equivocally.

If we wish to understand sensible objects it is no use dividing them into their elements (διαιρεῖν εἰς στοιχεῖα, 6.3.8.1). Such constituent parts will not be substances, or at any rate they will not be sensible substances. Once again we must look for common factors. What is there in common between stone, earth, water and later objects composed of these? They all

have qualities and quantities. And in fact sensible substance is a massing together (συμφόρησις, 6.3.8.20) of qualities and matter. When we recall that matter for Plotinus is only an abstraction, the last stage in the process of emanation away from the One, we realize that we are not too far from Plato after all. The mere *existence* in some form of this collection of qualities is substance (6.3.6). Bréhier has pointed to the comparison with Locke.[11] It follows, of course, that it is impossible to find substance apart from quality and quantity.

Qualities then coagulate into a particular substance (συμπαγέντα). If we ask how many qualities form a substance, the answer is that if the lack of any particular quality leaves the substance incomplete, that is, presumably, allows it to be something else, then that quality is required. We should notice that the word ἀπηρτισμένην occurs at 6.3.8.23. The 'substance' is rounded off by the possession of all its qualities. Plotinus even calls it an hypostasis.

It is to be noticed that Plotinus does not call the particular a 'collection' of qualities; instead he uses the word 'mixture' (μῖγμα) at line 26. There is a Stoic ring about this term; it may remind us of the complete transfusion of bodies which formed a cardinal though baffling part of Stoic physics and which Plotinus examines elsewhere.[12] Presumably he uses it because 'collection' might be held to imply that the particulars were in some way physically divisible or reducible to their qualitative parts—which would be absurd.

Plotinus pretends to be worried by the objection that if we think of particulars as substances composed of a mixture or collection of qualities we seem to be running the risk of forming substances out of what is not substance, or, to put the matter more clearly, of making beings out of what does not exist. We may wonder whether he has Aristotle in mind again here: Aristotle who supposed that the composites of form and matter are the real existents, but that the reality and existence of these existents is guaranteed by their essence, which in some sense does not itself exist.

Be that as it may, the problem presents no difficulties in the *Enneads*. The particular substance, here called 'a whole' (ὅλον), is not a true substance; hence of course it does not exist in the fullest sense, and it does not therefore matter that it is composed of what does not fully exist. It is only an imitation of reality; it is, as Plotinus puts it in a picturesque phrase, a sketch traced on a shadow.

Plotinus' descriptions of the particular are obscure and rendered obscurer still by the fact that they are introduced only in passing as incidentals to the refutation of Aristotelianism. 6.3.15 gives us a little more help. We have spoken of quality, says Plotinus (6.3.15.23), and shown how when it is mixed together (συμμιχθέν) with matter and quantity—the metaphysical nature of the description is here apparent—it completes the sensible substance. This sensible substance, he continues—with a probable reference to the passage from the *Seventh Letter* to which we referred earlier—must be thought of not so much as an essence but as something qualified. If we wish to find the essence, the essential nature, it is no good looking at the particular at all; one should look rather at its reason-principle or *logos*. The same idea is brought out perhaps more clearly in 2.6.1, in a treatise devoted to an examination of the phenomenon of quality. Here the reference to Plato is obvious: 'The truth is that while the Reason-Principles producing these entities contain nothing but what is of the nature of Reality, yet only in the Intellectual Realm do the produced things (ἀποτελέσματα) possess real existence: here they are not real; they are qualified (ποιά, οὐ τί). And this is the starting-point of an error we constantly make: in our enquiries into things we let realities escape us and fasten on what is mere quality. Thus fire is not the thing we so name from the observation of certain qualities present; fire is a Reality; the phenomena observed here and leading us to name fire lead us away from the authentic thing; a quality is erected into the very matter of definition—a procedure, however, reasonable enough in regard to things of the realm of sense

which are in no case realities, but accidents[13] of Reality' (trans. MacKenna-Page). Reverting to 6.3.15 we find that the example of fire is used again (l. 27ff.) and that the conclusion to be drawn from all this is that the essence of a thing is its Reason-Principle, which must lie in some sense outside itself. Thus although the individual can be treated as a logical subject, it cannot be understood metaphysically without reference to its cause.

Consider, says Plotinus, the case of Socrates. We call the man himself Socrates, but when we see his portrait we say 'That's Socrates'. In other words we call the mere paint of which the portrait is composed by the name 'Socrates'. If we take the parallel one stage higher, there are again two Socrateses: the one we recognize with our senses, primarily of course with our eyes, and the real Socrates, the Socratic personality. It is this personality, the 'reason-principle' of Socrates, which makes Socrates what he is. His sensible attributes (and qualities) are externals. Although we say therefore that 'Socrates is walking in the market-place' or 'Socrates is the son of Sophroniscus' and although there is no faulty logic about such language, we should recognize that these are not statements about the real Socrates.

In the case of Socrates it is the Reason-Principle, dependent on its Form, which is real. At this point in the chapter Plotinus becomes irritatingly reticent. The particular Reason-Principle of Socrates, he observes, bears the same relationship to the truest Reason-Principle of man as do the colours and shapes in the visible Socrates to those in his Reason-Principle. This seems to mean that the Reason-Principle of Socrates is somehow less real than the Reason-Principle of Man. How this is so Plotinus does not explain. 'That is how things are' (ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὕτως), is all he says. Now had Plotinus not taken Socrates as an example, but rather some kind of inanimate substance, this passage would raise few difficulties; as it is, however, it involves us in all the problems about Forms of Individuals in the philosophy of Plotinus, about whether they

exist and what relation they bear to generic Forms. Assuming that Plotinus does in fact posit Forms of Individuals,[14] at the very least in the case of individual men, what further information is provided by this passage? Only that, as we might expect, the world of Forms itself admits of division, of difference, of superiority and inferiority; that the Forms of classes are superior to the Forms of individuals.

Such then is the metaphysics of the particular. Plotinus' view is basically the original Platonic position. That position had outlasted the Aristotelian onslaught and was to survive when Aristotle's logic, tamed to the service of Neoplatonism, could be safely admitted to the curriculum as a prerequisite for Plotinian metaphysics. Thus in his introduction to Aristotle's *Categories* we find Porphyry asserting that the indivisible individual (ἄτομον) is composed (συνέστηκεν) of unique qualities (ἰδιότητες), that it is in fact a collection (ἄθροισμα) of such qualities.[15] From first to last the position of the Platonists is fundamentally the same.

III

9

THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL

Almost everyone who discusses the *Enneads* remarks at some stage that the theory of the production of the material world by Soul involves Plotinus in very great difficulties. On the one hand he believes with Plato's *Phaedo* that the soul is a prisoner in the body and that the material world is an inferior version of the intelligible; on the other he holds with Plato's *Timaeus* that the material world is a product of God and the best possible world of its kind, that it is the work of Providence and that it is full of the glory of its maker. When thinking of the return of the soul to its source, our commentator will continue, Plotinus thinks of a flight from the world and of souls living in the world as fallen and being punished for their fall by bodily life; when opposing the extreme dualism of the Gnostics, for whom the creator of the material universe is evil and his productions monstrous, Plotinus takes the contrary position and is almost Franciscan in his praises of the excellence of the cosmos and his talk of the importance of the soul as its maker and organizer. The two positions may be incompatible, the result of conflicting pressures which Plotinus was never able to resolve. Nevertheless even if it is true that he did not achieve a complete harmony of outlook, there appears to be a greater consistency in the *Enneads* than is generally admitted. In considering this degree of consistency, we shall touch briefly on such problems as the relation of matter and evil and the nature of the human soul, problems whose further clarification will be beneficial for the student of the philosophy of Plotinus in its widest aspects.

One of the crucial questions in Plotinus' dispute with the Gnostics is over the moral nature of the World Soul or some similar power. In *Ennead* 2.9.10 Plotinus refers to the Gnostic view—it would seem to be Valentinian—that the World Soul

and a certain Wisdom or Sophia 'declined' and entered the material world. He goes on to show the contradictions in the Gnostic account of what the material world is and how it came to exist, but this can be left aside for the time being. Our present aim is to make it clear that, for the adversaries of Plotinus, the World Soul is capable of a moral lapse and its products are the direct result of that moral lapse. Hence the material world is self-evidently evil. Plotinus' view of the World Soul, however, is quite different. The World Soul, as we shall see, is different in many respects from particular souls, and in no respect more clearly than in this, namely that it is particular souls which, in Inge's words, are travellers in the spiritual world, capable of ascent to the realms of pure Form or of the basest servitude to their material inferiors. The World Soul, on the other hand, is an hypostasis of true Being; it does not enter the world of sense and change, but produces and creates that world from above. Let us therefore look at those passages of the *Enneads* where this is explained.

Some of the Gnostics had claimed that the World Soul made the world 'after the failure of its wings' (πτεροῤῥυήσασαν, 2.9.4.1), as the language of the *Phaedrus* puts it. Plotinus' reply is that the World Soul could not suffer such a thing, and therefore by implication that Plato must have been thinking in terms of the soul of the individual. If the World Soul is fallen (σφαλεῖσαν), Plotinus challenges, tell us the cause of the fall! If it has been fallen from eternity, then its essential nature must be a fallen nature—which is impossible. If it fell at some particular time, why did it not do so earlier? The truth of the matter, in Plotinus' view, is that the construction of the world by the World Soul is not a decline (νεῦσις), but rather the opposite (μὴ νεῦσιν). For if it is a decline, then the soul has forgotten its origin, and if it has forgotten its origin, it could not create, for we know that creation is the reflection of contemplation. The creative soul should be supposed to be *inclining* to its superiors rather than *declining* towards formlessness and evil.[1] Since creation is the result of such upward inclinations,

another of the Gnostics' favourite themes is ruled out. It is ridiculous, says Plotinus, to imagine that the World Soul performs its creative acts in order to gain glory.[2] That is a merely anthropomorphic interpretation of the divine activity.

Plotinus' extended treatment of Gnostic theories on the descent of the World Soul in chapters 10 and 11 of this same tract enables us to pursue his own ideas further. It is clear from 2.9.10.23 ff. that the Gnostics talked both of the coming down (κατελθεῖν or νεῦσαι) of the soul, and of its 'illuminating' the darkness (ἐλλάμψαι μόνον τῷ σκότῳ). Yet if it did not come down (μὴ κατῆλθεν), asks Plotinus in 2.9.11.1, but illuminated the darkness, how can it be said to have declined in any sinful sense? The fact that it sheds light cannot be called such a declension. Only by leaving its own world and descending to the level of what is illuminated could the soul be said to have declined. Such movement, which would presumably involve taking on a body and entering into the world of space (ἡ δὲ ἦλθε τοπικῶς), is not a *necessary* complement to 'illumination'. The position of Plotinus, as opposed to that of the Gnostics, is that the World Soul remains above and illuminates matter without having physical contact with it.

It should be noticed that we have not yet determined what is illuminated, but have only seen that the World Soul does not descend to the lower level. Yet the language at the end of 2.9.10 should indicate the direction of Plotinus' thought on this further issue. Here there is a clear allusion to Gnostic dualism. For when the Gnostics talk of illumination, we must understand that the darkness which is illuminated is viewed as some kind of material substrate. Yet although this was probably the view of Plato and although Numenius a few years earlier had taken a dualistic position on this issue, Plotinus finds it vague and appears to despise it. They talk of matter, he says, or of materiality (ὑλότης) or of whatever else they want to call it. Yet if Plotinus does not accept an independent material substrate, how does he understand the illumination?

Before we turn to these difficulties, let us finally settle the question of the World Soul. The opinion that it does not descend, that its illumination is not a moral decline, is not merely introduced as polemic against the Gnostics. In 3.9.3.5 we read that the World Soul is always above, in 4.8.4 that it is only after abandoning the World Soul in the Intelligible World that particular souls fall into evil here on earth, in 4.8.7.27ff. that 'the so-called Soul of the All has never taken part in lower activity, but unaffected by evils and in a state of contemplation oversees what is below it and simultaneously stays fixed in what is above'. Finally it takes only a passage of the next section (4.8.8.13ff.) to summarize the situation. Although every soul, including the World Soul, is concerned both with the Intelligible World and with the governing of matter, yet the manner of operation of the World Soul is distinguished by its purity. As MacKenna-Page renders it: 'The Soul of the All, as an entirety, governs the universe through that part of it which leans to the body side, but since it does not exercise a will based on calculation as we do, but proceeds by purely intellectual act as in the execution of an artistic conception—its ministrance is that of a labourless overpowering (ὑπερέχουσα ἀπόνως).' We may leave the matter there. So far as the World Soul is concerned, there is no descent. Both the production and the guidance of the material world are the fulfilling of a function, but one to which not the slightest stain attaches. We can therefore now compare this situation with that of the individual soul.

There is a difference between the activities of the World Soul and of individual souls which is immediately obvious. The World Soul governs a body, the material universe, which will be maintained for ever in fundamentally the same state (4.8.2.15), for in Plotinus' view the four elements will never pass away, nor will the various species of living creatures that inhabit the earth's surface. The individual body, however, is a temporary and fragile lodgement for a soul which may from time to time pass through a whole string of such bodies with-

out necessarily forming an intimate connection with any of them. This different status of the body of the world and of individual bodies helps to indicate the different effects they will have on their governing souls. The individual soul governs what is short-lived and therefore partial; the World Soul governs something that will endure in some sense in its completeness and perfection.

These differences are made clearer when we consider some of the language Plotinus uses to describe the actions of the World Soul and individual souls in their creative aspects. The Gnostics, we recall, had tried to show the World Soul as guilty in its creative activities. Plotinus rejects this, as we saw, in many forms, and, as we must now notice, in a peculiar and significant form at 2.9.11.21–2. The World Soul does not create, we read, out of a spirit of vainglory and audacity (ἀλαζονείαν καὶ τόλμαν). The second of these words is peculiarly significant because it is precisely this quality of audacity which may be the ruin of the *individual* soul. What has caused the souls to forget their father? asks Plotinus, at the opening of 5.1.1. For these souls, is the reply, the beginning of evil is their audacity (τόλμα)...and their desire to be self-centred (τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι).[3] Here then is the most striking difference between the World Soul and the individual souls. Somehow or other the individual souls may be, and are, sinful.

When we consider the consequences of this for Plotinus' account of the material world, a paradox will confront us at once. In some sense both the World Soul and individual souls are responsible for the creation and maintenance of the world, yet their moral relationship to it is different. We saw in the case of the World Soul that a simple illumination (ἔλλαμψις) of whatever is below carries no stain of guilt, but that such guilt is incurred if bodily or spatial contact with these inferior products takes place. If we wish to examine how such contact occurs, we must consider further how matter and its products are actually produced, and the relation of the individual souls to them.

We must return once more to the treatise against the Gnostics, this time to 2.9.12.39ff. Here Plotinus considers—and implicitly rejects—two Gnostic alternatives. One view is that when the World Soul descended it saw the pre-existent darkness and lightened it. This view, which makes matter, materiality, or whatever the Gnostics called it, a kind of darkness unconnected with the emanation scheme from the One, is impossible for Plotinus. If the darkness is pre-existent, he adds, meaning if it is an independent reality (like the 'space' of the *Timaeus*), then where did it come from? It could not, he assumes, be uncaused. Then there is the other Gnostic alternative. What if the darkness were created by the 'decline' of the soul itself? If that is the case, then it is the nature of the soul itself to act immorally ('decline' in the Gnostic sense) and guilt is present in the realm of true Being—a conclusion which Plotinus goes on to speak of as reckless folly and which by implication he has rejected earlier in this very chapter. In line 32, for example, there is an examination of the concept of illumination (ἔλλαμψις). This must be either natural or unnatural. If it is natural, it must be eternal (and there is no need of an independent material substrate); if it is unnatural, then the realms not only of becoming but also of Being and Form are evil.

Nevertheless the notion of illumination is appropriate. There is illumination from the World Soul and it is eternal and natural. That being so, matter cannot be isolated as any kind of pre-existent darkness, for there is no pre-existence either temporally or ontologically. Matter cannot pass away, we read in 2.9.3.16, for if it could why did it come into existence? If it is isolated, and apart from the process of illumination from the World Soul and ultimately from the One, then the effects of the World Soul are spatially limited—which is impossible. Therefore the other alternative mentioned in this chapter must be the true one: matter is an 'implication' of the emanation process (παρακολουθεῖν). It is wholly negative, and thus not identical with the Gnostic 'darkness' whether

pre-existent or otherwise, though it could not for other reasons be pre-existent. It is simply what is 'there' when nothing is there, when the emanation process finally runs out. It may be compared with a mirror (3.6.13.49), but only in so far as other things appear in it, not in such a way as to make it a material object.

The same doctrine and the same word for the 'implication' of matter (ἠκολούθησεν) are to be found in a very difficult section of the early *Ennead* 4.8.[4] In view of the disputes on the meaning of this section, it will be necessary to quote the Greek in full. Plotinus writes as follows:

Εἴτ' οὖν ἦν ἀεὶ ἡ τῆς ὕλης φύσις, οὐχ οἷόν τε ἦν αὐτὴν μὴ μετασχεῖν οὖσαν τοῦ πᾶσι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καθόσον δύναται ἕκαστον χορηγοῦντος· εἴτ' ἠκολούθησεν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἡ γένεσις αὐτῆς τοῖς πρὸ αὐτῆς αἰτίοις, οὐδ' ὡς ἔδει χωρὶς εἶναι, ἀδυναμίᾳ πρὶν εἰς αὐτὴν ἐλθεῖν στάντος τοῦ καὶ τὸ εἶναι οἷον ἐν χάριτι δόντος.

Bréhier's view of this is as follows:[5] 'Either matter has always existed...or else its creation is a necessary consequence of antecedent causes. In the first case, it is a term distinct from the realities which proceed progressively from the One, and it may set itself against these realities. In the second case, it is the last term in the procession of the realities, that is to say, the sterile stage in which the productive force which has proceeded from the One at last dies out.' This view, which is presumably akin to that held by Puech,[6] neglects the whole significance of the words οὐδ' ὡς ἔδει χωρίς. This phrase must imply that it is the second alternative account of matter which might seem to suggest that matter is separate (χωρίς) from the One. What Plotinus is saying is that even if matter comes into existence as a necessary consequence of the causes πρὸ αὐτῆς—we will consider these words in a moment—even then it is not separate. This must mean that the first alternative ('if matter has always existed') can be the more easily understood to involve an ultimate connection of the emanation process with the production of matter. That being so, Bréhier's interpretation cannot be correct. The antithesis must be not

between matter as independent of the process of emanation and matter as the last stage of that process, but of a different kind. The antithesis must be, as I have suggested elsewhere,[7] between an eternal matter and a matter created in time. It is true that this latter possibility is not Plotinus' view, and indeed that it is a view which he rarely even considers; yet it is certainly not a view with which any third-century thinker would have been unfamiliar. The words πρὸ αὐτῆς therefore must have a temporal reference, for the sense of the whole passage forbids any other. Plotinus' second alternative is therefore that even if matter is a temporal creation, not even so is it apart from the One, for how could the One not be equal to any achievement? The fact that this is not his own view makes the words 'not even so' (οὐδ' ὡς) doubly appropriate.[8] Under no circumstances can matter be a darkness independent of the One, as Gnostics held. Nevertheless we should notice that Plotinus uses the word ἠκολούθησεν here of the alternative which is not his own. It is clearly a term he found peculiarly appropriate to the results of the emanation process when that process is viewed dynamically.

Matter therefore is to be accounted for as the last product in the stream of products deriving ultimately from the One. It is in some sense an outflowing which has come from the Soul of the All; yet since it is purely negative we must consider the question of how the material world comes to be variegated and multiform. The fact is of course that it is an image of the Intelligible World in general *and* of the intelligible Forms in particular. The particular Forms are represented by their *logoi* in the world of matter, and in some cases at least these *logoi* must be seen as souls. We must therefore consider the function of the individual soul in the creative process.

The harmony of the Intelligible World is such that each Form implies the World of Forms and the World of Forms implies each individual Form. Nor are the characteristics of the individuals fundamentally different from the characteristics of the whole. At the level of soul, however, as we have

already seen, the element of multiplicity has increased and the great effect of this increase is that although the World Soul will always remain pure, individual souls in their lower aspects are capable of a 'fall' comparable to that posited by Christian theology.

This is perhaps best explained in *Ennead* 1.1.12. Here the correct sense of the word νεῦσις, which we have seen used to refer both to upward and to downward movement in the treatise against the Gnostics, is explained more fully. The question before Plotinus is clear. When the soul produces its image in non-being by the customary process of emanation, must not this kind of 'decline' (νεῦσις) be a sin (ἁμαρτία)? Plotinus' answer is that if the 'decline' (νεῦσις) is an illumination of non-being and nothing more, then there is no sin. The sin occurs when a soul does more than illuminate, when it actually follows its own image and becomes enslaved by it. How, we may ask, could such a thing happen? And above all, is such a thing necessary for the process of creation?

The matter is raised in the sharpest form at 4.8.5.16. The descent of the soul involves a twofold sin: the motives for the descent involve sin; and sin is committed by the soul once it has descended. Both these sins are punished, the one by the descent itself, the other by the transmigration of the soul from body to body until it has completed its expiation.[9] It is natural that once the soul is down at the material level it will act unworthily. Our problem is in the first of the two sins, the sin involved with the motive for the descent itself. We have seen in the case of the World Soul that the act of creation by illumination is free from taint. The point must be, therefore, that in the case of the individual soul this act is committed from motives which are at the least not wholly pure. We must therefore examine all the reasons which govern this descent.

Line 26 of this very section (4.8.5) provides us with an answer. Three reasons are given why the soul descends. It comes down through a voluntary pressure (ῥοπῇ αὐτεξουσίῳ) and through the nature of its own power, both creative and

administrative, in the material world. Clearly if there is a sin involved in this descent it will be connected with the 'voluntary pressure' and Plotinus, we should recall, has taken the word ῥοπή from the *Phaedrus*, where Plato speaks in the myth of the charioteer of the evil horse weighing the chariot down.[10] This 'pressure' then is associated in Plotinus' mind with a kind of *nostalgie de la boue*. We must look for further instances of its use—and of the use of αὐτεξούσιος also.

The two words occur together again at 3.2.4.37, where we find ῥέπω used in a neutral sense in the sentence: Living things that have voluntary (αὐτεξούσιον) motion may incline (ῥέποι) now to the better, now to the worse. And this of course is the case with the soul, which may either turn itself to the World Soul and the Intelligible World beyond or down to its own products and the material sphere. More useful in our present enquiry are 4.3.17.25, where we hear of souls being pulled down like the captain who goes down with his ship, and 5.1.1.5—a passage we have looked at already—where after learning that among the causes of evil for the soul are its own audacity and self-centredness, we hear that it is in trouble through rejoicing in its own freedom (τῷ δὴ αὐτεξουσίῳ... ἡσθεῖσαι).

The individual soul therefore need not content itself with illumination as does the World Soul; it has the choice of good or evil before it and is responsible for its own decisions. It is inevitable that it will 'decline' towards the material world for the sake of creation, and there is nothing wrong in that. The crucial point is in its attitude towards its own 'decline'. The test for the soul is whether it falls in love with itself and its products and forgets its source, for it has the power to take this course if it wishes. We can see therefore why at 4.3.13.17 ff. Plotinus says that the souls descend neither through compulsion nor from free-will in the sense of rational choice. Their act, he continues, is a kind of natural leap, such as men make towards marriage, or in a few cases towards the performance of noble deeds. We say of such people that their actions come

naturally, and Plotinus cannot strictly call such naturalness either freedom or compulsion. As he puts it again at 4.8.5.3 ff., necessity includes the voluntary, for the descent is neither wholly voluntary nor wholly involuntary. No soul voluntarily descends to its inferiors, if we understand 'voluntary' in the Socratic sense, yet there does appear to be some fault in submitting with too good a grace to however natural and inevitable a tendency if that tendency may lead to sin. We must suppose therefore that the degree of sin involved is determined by the nature of the individual soul itself. The pure soul can act in its descent as does the World Soul, and no harm is done. Most souls, however, will be overwhelmed by their own handiwork and accept the necessity of descent so gladly as to forget the moral duty to return. How Plotinus describes this particular aberrancy we must now consider.

Plotinus relies heavily upon two texts from the *Phaedrus* in his description of the production and care of the material world. In 246B he finds that soul concerns itself with what is soulless, and in 247A that there is no place for envy or jealousy in what is divine. Hence the soul by its nature must overflow and produce and guide the material world. At this stage the production of the material world would appear to be parallel to the production of Νοῦς by the One and Soul itself by Νοῦς. And in the case of the World Soul this parallel seems to hold. Yet in the case of the particular souls it does not, for paradoxically enough there appears to be some kind of self-centredness involved in the creative power of the particular soul of which the World Soul has no share—a self-centredness which must have to do with the individual soul's power to choose between good and evil and which must explain why the individual souls fall and the World Soul does not. We might expect to find the fact that the individual soul is sent down by the World Soul explained as an overflowing of the individual, but what Plotinus actually says is very different. In 5.2.1.19 ff. we read that when individual souls look back to the World Soul from which they have come they gain their

fulfilment, but that when they proceed to another motion they produce images of themselves which are the powers of sensation in the animal world and growth in the world of plants. It would seem that the production is not a spontaneous overflowing which occurs as a result of the soul's looking back to its source, but a contrary and sinful, yet deliberate move away. It seems that, though the soul will only be fulfilled by a return whence it has come, it is too weak to concentrate itself upon that return and as a result of this weakness turns away from its source and creates the world of matter. Such a situation would not of course mean that the material world is evil, but rather that the soul is weak, not that this is not the best of all possible worlds and an image of the divine, but that so far as the individual soul, though not the World Soul, is concerned, it would have been better if it had never existed.

The same critical picture of the creative activities of the individual soul can be found in *Ennead* 3.9.3. Here we find that the 'partial' soul, as Plotinus here names the individual, is illuminated (φωτίζεται) by moving back towards its ontological priors, for by doing so it will re-enter the world of reality, but when it does the opposite and is drawn towards its inferiors it approaches the non-existent. At this stage its activity is described as follows: 'It does this when it is carried towards itself, for when its will is set on itself (πρὸς αὑτὴν γὰρ βουλομένη) it produces the image of itself which comes after itself, and this is non-being.' We should recall immediately 5.1.1, where it was 'the will to belong to themselves' that helped to bring evil to the souls and made them forget their father. Now this very self-will is seen to be part of the creative process itself, so far as the individual soul is concerned. We can see why Plotinus speaks of the descent in the passage we examined above as a twofold sin.

So far this tract has only described a part of the process of the construction of the material world, and that process has involved the soul in guilt. It goes on to describe the second stage. Stage one has involved the production of an image of

the soul, which Plotinus calls non-being and which is plainly to be thought of as matter. The next stage is a second descent to that matter or image and the introduction of form to it. We should notice the difference here between matter in the Intelligible World and physical matter. Intelligible matter once produced has the power to turn back to its source to receive its form from that source;[11] the prime matter of the physical universe has no power whatever; it is dead, and can only acquire the semblance of form by a further completed act of the soul. 3.9.3 goes on to explain this second act: 'By a kind of inferior orientation it shapes the image and approaches it rejoicing (ἡσθεῖσα).' We should probably be suspicious of this rejoicing. From 5.1.1 we are aware that when the soul rejoiced in its freedom of choice, this rejoicing led to trouble. It is a dangerous pleasure that the soul enjoys. Its true pleasure can only be found in a return to its source.

The creative activities of the individual soul therefore are fraught with sin. Instead of creating by mere reflection, as does the World Soul, the individual has acted out of an incipient revolt against its priors and an urge of irrepressible selfishness. Now let us see how it behaves in the other of its proper functions, namely the administration of what it has produced. Here too we shall find its performance inadequate. The theme is the same in a number of passages, but 4.3.12 will perhaps prove the most fruitful starting-point. The souls of men, says Plotinus, have, as it were, seen their images in the mirror of Dionysus[12] and as a result have rushed down from their homes above to the inferior realm. This is a picture with which we are already familiar, but Plotinus goes on to explain (line 6) that the depth of the descent is increased by the fact that the souls are compelled to care for the matter to which they have come. Now we recall that the powers of the soul were properly to be deployed not only in the production of the material universe, but in its administration. Yet we are now to understand that this administration, this concern for the soulless, as the *Phaedrus* puts it, brings additional dangers in its

train. The soul descends, as lines 38–9 of our present chapter tell us, to whatever aspect of the material world it itself resembles. If it is itself humane, it will therefore enter a human body; if it is bestial, it will enter the body of a beast.[13] All evidently still depends on the nature of the soul itself and on its own power to choose its own fortune. Yet this choice will not only affect the type of material object the individual soul will create and administer, but also the extent of that administration. For this administration, though admirable in itself, as it is in the case of the World Soul, can be taken too far, and the soul, while devoting itself to its products, can conceal its lack of moral and philosophical direction in a specious concern for the material universe (4.8.2.26–30). This theme occurs on a number of occasions. We have looked at 4.3.17.21 ff. already. Here the soul is compared to the pilot who is so concerned for his ship that he is weighed down and sinks with her. Similarly the soul is so involved in its care for matter that it ceases to be its own master. It is as though it has fallen victim to magical powers which bind it fatally to the material world (πεδηθεῖσαι γοητείας δεσμοῖς, σχεθεῖσαι φύσεως κηδεμονίᾳ).

The same picture can be seen at 4.8.7.9–10. So long as the soul is restrained in the amount of administrative care it lavishes on its material products, all is well; but there will come a time when through excessive zeal it will go overboard (εἰς τὸ εἴσω δύοιτο). It will then sink to the level of its own image, for, as we read elsewhere (1.8.4.7), it is disastrous for the soul to be so involved with its material work that it becomes enslaved. 4.8.2.42 runs as follows: 'Commerce with the body is repudiated for only two reasons, as hindering the soul's intellective act and as filling it with pleasure, desire, pain; but neither of these misfortunes can befall a soul which has never deeply penetrated into the body (εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἔδυ τοῦ σώματος), is not a slave but a sovereign ruling over a body of such an order as to have no need and no shortcoming and therefore to give ground for neither desire nor fear' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

We have already looked at 4.8.7. This chapter contains two further points which should be considered here, one of a unique character in the *Enneads*, the other indicative of Plotinus' general position on the great problem which underlies the whole of the present discussion, namely the relation between the World Soul and individual souls. The first point is this: Plotinus remarks (4.8.7.11) that after the soul has fallen and involved itself too much in the material sphere, it is still able to recover itself and is able to turn its newly acquired knowledge to account since, by experiencing evil and its results, it can learn the better to appreciate goodness. This is a commonplace enough idea, and it harmonizes well with the traditional Greek note of learning by suffering, but what is curious for Plotinus is that the soul can acquire a *greater* knowledge of realities by this roundabout means. His more normal position appears in 4.8.5, where it is merely said that by acquiring knowledge of evil and by bringing its potentially creative powers into full operation, the soul will not suffer any permanent harm—so long as its descent into the material world is not of long duration. Of course the realization of the soul's powers *per se* could only be a good; it is the knowledge of evil which would bring the trouble, for the soul is all too ready to be seduced.

The second point we must clarify in 4.8.7 is of greater importance, namely that concerning the relation of the individual soul to the World Soul. We read in line 10 that when the soul makes its over-zealous dash into the material world, it ceases to be 'a whole soul with a whole soul' (μὴ μείνασα ὅλη μεθ' ὅλης). The point of this is explained in detail in 4.8.4, which is perhaps the most important chapter of the whole of the *Enneads* for our present problem. It will be valuable to describe the chapter in detail. Plotinus begins by saying that the individual souls have both the desire to return to the Intelligible World and a power directed to the world below. They are like the sun (and the higher hypostases of the Plotinian universe), in that they do not grudge their life-giving

powers to their inferiors. They are thus able to share the general administrative work of the universe with the World Soul (συνδιοικεῖν). They are seated around the World Soul like kings around the King of Kings and engage in administrative work without descending from their thrones. Yet then unaccountably comes the crucial stage. The souls seem to grow weary of their collective endeavour; they want to carve out kingdoms for themselves; they become self-centred, and since they are self-centred their collective nature is lost (ἐκ τοῦ ὅλου εἰς τὸ μέρος τε εἶναι καὶ ἑαυτῶν). The result is that fearful state in the Plotinian world, plurality and separation. Each soul retires (ἀναχωροῦσιν), looks after its own, is isolated (μονοῦται), weakened and bereft of the universal. Isolated with its own particular product, it becomes more and more closely involved with it (δῦσα πολὺ εἰς τὸ εἴσω, line 21). This is the real loss of its wings, the real fall; at this stage, against all its best interests, the soul is in chains, a prisoner shut up in a bodily cave.

The truth about the descent of the soul should now be apparent. There is nothing wrong with the material world *per se*; it is the best of all possible material worlds. It is mere blasphemous folly on the part of the Gnostics to revile the world and its maker, and to reject the kindly hand of Providence. The fault lies not in the creation of the world, but in the attitude of the individual soul.

Yet before concluding we must attempt to relate this question of the attitude of the soul to the more general problem of the relation of matter and evil. For a full discussion of this the reader may be referred elsewhere,[14] but there are a few details which are relevant to our present problems. There are a number of passages where Plotinus refers to matter as the 'prime evil'. At 1.8.5.26 we read that as individuals we are not the source or beginning (ἀρχή) of evil. Evil is prior to us and existed before we took on our bodily forms. As 1.8.8.38 puts it, what is without measure is evil primarily, and this, we are to assume, is matter. Yet the true interpretation of such passages

is to be found at the end of 2.4.16. Since matter is sheer negativity, it is utterly destitute of sense, virtue, beauty, strength, shape, form and quality, and must be called the complete ugliness, the absolute evil. In other words, negativity has positively bad effects. Matter is no metaphysical evil, for it only exists as 'non-being', but its sheer lack of reality means that its effects will be bad. This is the sense in which it is the prime evil.

With this clear in our minds we can understand the proper significance of the very difficult chapter 1.8.14, which discusses the relation of the pure negativity which is matter to the soul's inherent weakness. The suggestion at the beginning of the chapter is that vice (κακία) may be a weakness of the soul. Now such weakness, says Plotinus (line 17), must exist either in souls separate from matter, or in souls enveloped in matter, or in both. But in fact, he argues, there will be no weakness in a soul which is wholly apart from matter, such, we may suppose, as is the World Soul. It inevitably follows that there will only be weakness where there is matter, and thus entry into matter is the fall of the soul and its weakness (l. 44). Hence we have to conclude that matter is the cause of weakness and of vice for the soul (l. 50).

Yet we recall that matter has no positive power except in so far as it is not good. While metaphysically nothing it can be morally damaging. And so we can summarize the problem. The cause of the fall of the soul, as we saw earlier, is its desire to be by itself, its selfishness, its being overwhelmed by gross pleasures under the pretext of caring for the body, its deliberate choice of a different manner of behaviour towards the material world from that of the World Soul, its origin. Yet it is the presence of matter itself, or we might say its non-presence, which induces this weakness. Or perhaps what Plotinus means is that the weakness itself is what matter really is and that we should define matter quite simply as a weakness of the soul.

Yet if we take this line, the inevitable questions which

Plotinus has not attempted to answer will come up: Why does matter affect the particular souls and not the World Soul? Why does the particular soul descend too low when it does not appear necessary for the construction of the world that it should do so? One might infer a reply to these questions, but Plotinus gives none. The reply would be on the lines that somehow the individual soul is prone to weakness, that its possession of the power of choice between good and evil means that inevitably it will sometimes choose evil. It is probably only the influence of Plato which prevented Plotinus answering in this way.[15]

To conclude, then, there is no evidence that Plotinus thinks that the creation and existence of the material world is evil *per se*. His doctrine of the relation of matter and evil is clear and consistent. Where he has failed to draw the conclusions of his own premisses is in his account of the potentialities for evil in the individual soul.

10

MAN'S FREE WILL

We often read about the deterministic outlook of the ancients. It is certainly true that the question of free will is not given the treatment it deserves in such works as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Those writers who devote considerable energy to contrasting the thought of ancient times with that of Christianity find the question of the will offers them a fine field for sweeping generalizations. It is therefore appropriate to open this brief discussion with a quotation from a writer whose chief interest is Augustine, not because her treatment of Plotinus is strikingly ungenerous—indeed she usually does him justice—but because in her insistence on fixing the difference between Plotinus and later philosophers, here represented by Augustine, on the nature of the will and on its powers, she typifies a widespread attitude of mind. After a discussion of Plotinus' remarks on the freedom of the human will in the early section of *Ennead* 6.8, Mother Mary Clark writes as follows:[1] 'In this consideration of freedom, the reader is conscious of the intense intellectualism of the Plotinian system. The intellect is itself desire of the Good, of the One. This is the intellect in its willing-phase. There is necessity here and spontaneity but, according to Plotinus, no coercion. The mind confronted with the truth would never be unwilling to adhere to it, according to Plotinus. The synthesis of the metaphysical and the moral viewpoints leaves no gap for the contingent factor of free will.' There is much truth in what Mother Clark says, but the reader of the *Enneads* may feel some doubt about the emphases. In what sense is there 'no gap for the contingent factor of free will'? Is Plotinus then a determinist after all?

It is not necessary to attempt a detailed survey of Plotinus' whole discussion of free will, for much of this has been done by Henry.[2] We can assume many of the results of his work and

use them throughout. It is possible, therefore, to rest our remarks on the philosophical significance of Plotinus' achievement on a firm exegesis of the relevant texts, to which we shall refer less fully than would be necessary for a commentary on all Plotinus' writings on this subject, but adequately for a consideration of his conclusions. The reader is referred to Henry's study for additional detail.

As G. H. Clark pointed out quite clearly,[3] the problem of free will in Plotinus must be viewed at two levels, levels which are certainly connected but which pose different problems and which must be considered individually before general conclusions are obtainable. The two levels are that of the empirical self (can man act freely in the physical world?), and that of the higher self (in what sense can νοῦς in pure act be called free?). It is at the lower level that it is the more difficult to grasp Plotinus' thought in its fullness.

Ennead 6.8.1 gives us the basic definition of what is voluntary (ἑκούσιον). For an action to be voluntary it must be performed without any compulsion and in full knowledge of every relevant circumstance (ἑκούσιον μὲν γὰρ πᾶν, ὃ μὴ βίᾳ μετὰ τοῦ εἰδέναι). We recognize at once the debt of Plotinus to the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, but even within this tract are to be found ideas which give the Aristotelian words a Platonic significance. The catch, so to speak, comes in the idea of 'full knowledge', for Plotinus remarks immediately that in the case of a son's killing his father, the act is involuntary not only when the son fails to recognize his father (as in the case of Oedipus) but when he fails to recognize the evil nature of murder. And, continues Plotinus, if it be said that the murderer should have learned such an elementary moral principle, then ignorance of the duty implied in such a 'should' itself constitutes ignorance. In other words, Plotinus is understanding 'knowing' in the Platonic sense, namely that if a man really knows what is right, he will do what is right, or, as Mother Clark puts it, that 'the mind confronted with the truth would never be unwilling to adhere to it, according to

Plotinus'. For the Platonist, real knowing involves willing, and, where possible, doing.

This is exactly the point at which the problem of free will at the empirical level arises. Real knowing of this Platonic type is knowledge of eternal truths; it is not primarily knowledge of the contingent world, even though it may help to explain the contingent world. Yet if we cannot have real knowledge of the contingent world, how can any of our acts in this world be free? The problem is clearly considerable for Plotinus himself as well as for his interpreters. His view is that actions in the physical world are not wholly free.[4] In defending this position, he first remarks (6.8.2) that in physical life man's actions depend on passions and impulses and other irrational pressures, and that the freedom of the intellect is therefore restricted; but there is a more subtle argument which he brings up in 6.8.5 and which poses problems often beyond the scope of the more facile defenders of the freedom of the will to resolve; problems, however, which we who have heard of behaviourism and Pavlovian dogs find very familiar. The difficulty with man in the physical world, in Plotinus' view, is that he is so much a prisoner of the given. Suppose there is a war, says Plotinus. Then the brave man will be able to act bravely. Yet his performance is entirely dependent on whether there is a war at all. And as with courage, so with all the virtues. If there is no injustice, how can one establish justice? Even the doctor would not be able to exercise his skill if he had no patients. Yet if he is a good doctor he would prefer there to be no patients. Thus even when he is healing the sick, he is being forced to exercise his skill by circumstances he would wish to be otherwise. All this being so, asks Plotinus, how can any act of virtue be called completely free? Obviously it is not; yet on the other hand it is not completely determined either. Presumably the brave man is not an automaton whose reflexes simply cause him to act bravely. That is certainly not how Plotinus understands any virtue.

The idea expressed in 6.8.5, namely that our actions in

the physical world are not entirely free, yet may have some kind of freedom in them, is clearly apparent in the very early tract 3.1. Here, in chapter ten, we learn that in the physical world there are two kinds of causation, that due to the operation of soul and that due to the environment. For these acts of the soul the individual must take responsibility (3.1.4.25). Against the astrologers Plotinus defends our own responsibility for our actions (3.1.5.20), while against the Stoics he remarks that given their view of a rigid Necessity or Destiny, independent personal action exists only in theory (3.1.7.15).

Even G. H. Clark agrees that in *Ennead* 3.1 Plotinus makes a number of statements which can be interpreted non-deterministically,[5] but he thinks that Plotinus is precluding only a certain kind of determinism and that the much later treatise 3.2, though again containing a few apparently non-determinist passages, is in fact thoroughly determinist. He notices for example that at 3.2.7.19–20 Plotinus declares that Providence should not be held responsible for evil acts committed by man. Responsibility lies with the guilty soul that makes the choice of evil, says Plotinus, quoting the tenth book of Plato's *Republic* (617E). As we have noticed, the idea that the agent is guilty has appeared before in Plotinus;[6] we find it again in 3.2.10.7ff.: 'The fact that sin (ἁμαρτία) is involuntary and that men thus sin involuntarily does not mean that their actions are not their own. Because they themselves act, they themselves sin.' In view of passages like this Clark holds that the whole theory is determinist. The man is guilty because he acts; yet his sin (ἁμαρτία) is involuntary. If there is any choice, it must be in an earlier life. Hence Clark suggests that, when in 3.2.7 Plotinus refers to the choice of the soul, he is thinking of the context of the original passage in the *Republic* and defending a deterministic view of *this* life by referring to a choice made before birth. Yet we know well how Plotinus can interpret Plato out of context, and in the passage concerned it is evident that it is not a pre-natal choice which is in

question. The choice is one made by a man with a moral problem in the course of his natural life.

Yet what are we to make of the view that action itself involves guilt and that though we sin unwillingly, yet we do sin and are thus guilty? Can we help ourselves? Does this mean that in our actions at least we are determined? Clearly in view of what Plotinus has offered as the definition of a voluntary act and of his opinion that there are two causal factors, ourselves and our environment, the answer is no. The doctor has some choice in whether he cures the sick, the soldier in whether he acts bravely. This choice, it is true, depends upon the vestiges of knowledge, of real knowledge, possessed by the individual; yet however caused it is still there.

Yet do not the treatises on Providence (3.2; 3.3) suggest that man is like an actor who plays many parts, that if he is murdered now, he is being punished for crimes committed in earlier incarnations? Is not a pre-determined course of life the sure sign of the continued workings of Providence which ensures that all ultimately works out justly and harmoniously? Inge[7] has remarked that Plotinus does not resolve the problem of how an original choice leading to an evil character is made, and G. H. Clark[8] properly replies that there was no original choice, for the series of incarnations is from eternity. Yet Clark sees a further difficulty: it is no explanation of the existence of evil to say that it has existed from eternity.

Plotinus never offers a direct answer to these questions, but his opinion can be discovered by viewing the *Enneads* and his teaching career as a whole. Whatever the force of destiny, whatever fate is in store for a man because of his past lives, he can still make a decision for the good, and such a decision can even affect the life of action. When at the end of 5.3.17 Plotinus, calling on his followers to take up the good life, challenges them to cut away the trappings of finite existence (ἄφελε πάντα), he is not talking to the air. He is saying something which can have meaning. Man is able to turn back from his passions, his crimes and his destiny. In this sense he is the

master of himself. How destiny can be overcome in this way will shortly become clearer, but the fact itself is plain. Destiny affects such things as life and death, mere trivia to Plotinus. It may be that the hand of Providence will write down a man's death as a retribution for previous crimes and a restoration of cosmic harmony, but that does not affect the power of that man to better himself in the important area of life, the area of the nature of his soul. And the cultivation of the soul involves, as a matter of course, the performance of the civic virtues. There is for Plotinus no virtue which can do without ordinary morality.[9]

We can now turn our attention to the relation of will and sin. It is in 4.8.5, where Plotinus is treating of the descent of the soul—a problem which we discussed in the previous chapter—that we find the clear statement that all degeneration is involuntary (πᾶν μὲν γὰρ ἰὸν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἀκούσιον). This is of course a Plotinian application of the Socratic and Platonic tenet that no one commits a sin (ἁμαρτία) willingly. But we know what kind of meaning this language bears in a Platonic context. Clearly no one *makes a mistake* willingly, when he is trying to understand the course of life which will be the most beneficial to him. When he does in fact *make a mistake*, it is, in the Platonic (and Plotinian) view, because his intellect has been overwhelmed by the unruly monster of his passions and because he is in fact unable to 'give the right answer', as we might put it if we wish to retain some of the force of the original language. Hence his mistake is a sin, though he does not recognize either that he is making a mistake or that he is sinning. If he could recognize it, this would indicate that his intellect still had some power to see straight, and he would be at least on the road to recovery. Here then is what Plotinus means when he tells us that degeneration is involuntary (ἀκούσιον). He does not mean that we do not choose what will lead to degeneration. We do in fact choose such things, deluded by our environment or our passions into thinking that they will bring us goods. What Plotinus does not say, of course, is that it

would be possible for us with full knowledge of our true good and evil to choose what is evil; but we shall return to that later.

So much then for the choices that are open to us at the 'empirical' level. We have seen that at this level we can never attain perfect freedom, in fact that the freer we become, the more we are raised from the world of action and contingency to the World of νοῦς. For Plotinus, as *Ennead* 6.8 makes abundantly clear, it is only at the level of νοῦς that absolute freedom can be found. Here alone is perfect knowledge a possibility; here alone therefore are all the conditions for the voluntary act fulfilled. Freedom is in fact a kind of natural inclination or élan, present in νοῦς, and directed towards the One. It is a combination of the knowledge of what is right with the inevitable and immediate decision to translate that knowledge into action. Mother Clark complains that man is given no power over this élan[10]—a strange complaint from a Christian who believes, presumably, that without God's grace man cannot perform a noble act. Such criticism, moreover, would not worry Plotinus. What value would it be, he would say, to possess perfect knowledge and be able to reject it? Indeed such is the construction of man's soul and νοῦς that if he did reject the good, abandon the élan towards the One, it would simply indicate that he did not really have knowledge at all. Here then is the crux of the problem. Words like 'intellectualist' or 'voluntarist' can be very misleading when used with reference to Plotinian man. For Plotinus man's intellect at its highest is his will; his will is his intellect. In the One, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, will is in a sense prior, for the One is what he wills to be and his will is its own achievement. Yet though it is true to say that this concept of the One is held up by Plotinus as the ideal for man also, it is inevitably an impossible ideal, for there is only one One, that is, the One is first cause, creator, if you like, while the lower hypostases are merely dependent realities and can never be independent.

The great difference between Plotinus and Christian

thinkers, which it has become fashionable to trace to Plotinus' alleged lack of interest in or ignorance of the rôle of free will, is in fact to be traced to the nature of Platonic knowledge and, more fundamentally, to Plotinus' optimistic view of human capabilities. When man is produced in the Plotinian world, he is a being capable, produced capable, of returning to his origins, of attaining ὁμοίωσις θεῷ.[11] He can attain it precisely because part of his soul has not fallen, has not been swamped by the passions, but remains above in the Intelligible World.[12] This part of the soul, to which reference must frequently be made in any writings on Plotinus, is in perpetual enjoyment of that élan towards the One of which we have spoken. We are only conscious of the activity of this higher self when we direct our whole personality in accordance with it, but it functions nevertheless. It is the god-given root of human nature and human excellence.

This higher self is that conjoint of will and intellect to which we have referred. It is characterized by the élan towards the One and will never choose other than the best. Why is this? It is because a mind which is not impeded by the passions and circumstances of the material world and which is governed by true knowledge will always choose the best. This highest kind of freedom is in a sense possessed by man, but in a sense is a thing to be regained, for we often allow ourselves to neglect it. Like the sea-god Glaucus of Plato's *Republic*, our souls must be stripped of the excrescences that have gathered around them and must exhibit their purity and freedom.[13] When this has been done, we shall be completely free.

Freedom then for Plotinus is not simply equivalent to the power of choice. Rather it is freedom from that necessity of choice which the passions impose. The soul that hesitates between good and evil is not free, nor is such a choice godlike. What is godlike is the desire for the truth and achievement of it, and this is a power available to the purified soul. It is an optimistic philosophy, but in Plotinus' world, where salvation by any miraculous act of God is excluded, it is the only alterna-

tive to despair. Were man to be unable to choose the right without additional help from God, then he would not choose the right at all. It is essential to realize that here, in the matter of how far man's nature is corrupted, lies a major challenge of Plotinus' thought. It does not greatly matter whether he subsumes knowledge and will under the general heading of νοῦς; his understanding of the relation between the two can easily be unravelled. It does matter, however, whether his estimation of the divine nature of the human spirit answers to the facts of psychology and morality as we understand them.

11

HAPPINESS

The nature of happiness—in Greek εὐδαιμονία—had always been in the forefront of Greek philosophical enquiry. Aristotle had assumed that it is universally desired and had devoted the major part of his ethical works to enquiring what it is. Only the Stoics had relegated it to comparative insignificance, for though the Stoic sage would doubtless have appeared happy to a Stoic, the question of happiness paled before that of virtue. In chapter four of the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle outlines a number of the popular positions: happiness is pleasure, or wealth, or honour. These he later considers and rejects, together with the Platonic view that it is the possession in one's soul of the Form of the Good. But as we know, popular views have a way of returning in more or less sophisticated guises as philosophical theory, and the identification of happiness with pleasure, rejected by Aristotle in the tenth book of the *Ethics*, returns in a cruder form with Epicureanism. Hence when Plotinus takes up the matter formally in *Ennead* 1.4, one of his latest compositions, he thinks it advisable to mention a number, though not all, of the current views and interpretations while still allowing himself to be greatly influenced by Aristotle's treatment of the subject.

It is a little curious that pleasure plays such a small part in the introduction to the subject of happiness in 1.4.1 and 1.4.2, but the explanation of this may perhaps be that the treatise is aimed at those at least partially converted and aware of Plotinus' views on Epicureanism. A creed which makes pleasure the end of life, as we realize from 2.9.15, is suitable to philosophers like Epicurus who reject the power of Providence, and for whom nothing but sensual enjoyment remains; but plainly this is inadequate for the true philosopher. We should never forget the gross implications which the Greeks

always saw beneath the word 'pleasure' (ἡδονή). When Plato, for example, thinks of ἡδονή, he thinks first and foremost of food, drink and sex,[1] and when Epicurus wishes to emphasize his views of the good in the most extreme form, he tells us that the source and root of all good is the pleasure of the belly,[2] or again that nothing good is left if we take away the pleasures of taste, of sex, of sound and of sweet movement.[3] It is true that such pleasures bring pain with them, and are therefore to be avoided by the cautious Epicurean sage, but *qua* pleasure they seem to have been regarded as ideal. Thus despite Aristotle's careful effort in the *Ethics* to find a place for pleasure in the happy life, it is clear that Plotinus will have to begin by determining exactly what pleasures he will exclude.

Ennead 1.4, *On Happiness*, then, begins with Aristotle. Are we to identify happiness (τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν) with flourishing (τὸ εὖ ζῆν), as, in Aristotle's opinion (though Plotinus does not say this), the majority of people do? Plotinus is prepared to accept such an account provided he can determine what flourishing (τὸ εὖ ζῆν) is; and indeed the Aristotelian approach suits him well, for the Greek for 'flourishing' (τὸ εὖ ζῆν) means literally 'living well', and life is, as we could tell from almost any page of the *Enneads*, a mark *par excellence* of the world of the Forms and of Νοῦς. And we should remember too that εὐδαιμονία (happiness) is to be interpreted as having one's *daimon* in good shape; and in the *Timaeus* a man's *daimon* is his mind (νοῦς).[4]

But if happiness is living well, we must notice not only the prominence given to life, but to the importance of the good in life, and on this subject the ancient philosophers had radically different opinions. In chapters one and two of *Ennead* 1.4 we meet a number of these positions, only to find that the same objection can be brought against all of them but one. This objection is that the good of life, which constitutes happiness, must be intrinsically and primarily good. There is no place in Plotinus' world for an ultimate multiplicity of goods. An example of this is afforded by his treatment of the idea that the good life is the life of discursive reason (1.4.2.32 ff.). Why

do people say that the life of *logos* is good and happy? Surely it is because *logos* is resourceful (εὐμήχανον) and able easily to track down and secure the prime natural needs (τὰ πρῶτα κατὰ φύσιν).[5] But if *logos* is only the means to an end, then it cannot be the good in life.

Like most of the Greek philosophers other than the Cynics, Plotinus holds that the good life for man will differ from the good life for animals or plants. It cannot therefore depend on any faculty which is possessed by either animals or plants. Hence, as we have already seen, pleasure can be ruled out, as can any good life dependent on sensation (1.4.2), or on any kind of Epicurean untroubledness (ἀταραξία), or any kind of Stoic attainment of life according to nature (τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν). In 1.4.2 Plotinus indicates that he thinks that the treatment of the relationship between happiness and αἴσθησις by his predecessors has been particularly crass. If people deny happiness to plants because they have no αἴσθησις, they are in fact asserting that nothing living possesses happiness at all. If αἴσθησις means mere feeling, then animals enjoy happiness as much as men; if it means having the experience of being part of the natural plan, this is a good whether the experience is conscious or unconscious, and is possessed equally by plants. If however αἴσθησις is taken to mean 'perception', then a higher faculty than mere sensation is involved, and the good life (τὸ εὖ ζῆν) depends not on sensation but on some faculty able to make judgements of such a kind as 'Pleasure is the good' (1.4.2.24).

Chapter three appears to be a fresh start, for, although Plotinus says that we should base our notion of happiness (τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν) on life (ἐν ζωῇ), this is in fact what he has been examining in the earlier chapters. The effect of these chapters, however, has been to demonstrate that his predecessors have not understood what life is in its highest manifestations, and particularly what is its relationship to the Good. The present chapter begins by stating firmly that the mere being alive will not be an adequate condition for happiness. There are, as

Plotinus puts it (1.4.3.18ff.), many varieties of existents which may be referred to under the heading 'living things', and each variety may be distinguished by its 'brightness' or 'dimness'—animals from plants, for example. Mere existence, therefore, is inadequate for the good life and for happiness; what is required is what Plotinus rather extraordinarily calls 'excess of life' (τὸ ἄγαν ζῆν, 1.4.3.24).[6] Beings which possess this 'excess of life'—presumably MacKenna is right to translate this as 'fullness of life'—are happy. And if we ask what is the foundation (τὸ ἐνυπάρχον) of such a life, the answer is of course the Good—with all its metaphysical implications (1.4.3.32). Plotinus emphasizes the significance of this by hyperbolically rejecting the term 'cause' (αἴτιον) as a description of the Good or One in this context—though it is of course the cause of all things—and calling it instead the basis or underlying foundation (ἐνυπάρχον), as if to indicate the absolutely essential need of its presence for the generation and maintenance of happiness.

Thus at the end of chapter three Plotinus is able to establish his basic position. He tells us that it has been laid down more than once that the perfect life is to be found 'in the intelligible nature' (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ νοερᾷ φύσει), and that all other forms of life are mere traces, mere incomplete versions of what is to be found in the world of Forms.[7] Furthermore, since there is a simple cause of all that is living, it is evident that this cause can be thought of as possessor of the first and most complete life. In short we may say that happiness consists in the attainment of the Good by whatever living thing, through its possession of νοῦς, is able to attain it.

There is an obvious objection which might be raised at this point, and which apparently Plotinus answers only by implication. At the beginning of *Ennead* 3.8 we learn that it is not only man who strives after contemplation, but that this desire for perfection—could we say 'for happiness'?—is common to the whole of nature. Plotinus specifically mentions unreasoning animals. And yet if νοῦς is the fullness of life and if only beings

endowed with νοῦς can attain such fullness, then how can 'unreasoning animals' indulge in contemplation at all? We will have to say that there are degrees of happiness, just as there are degrees of 'life' in the Plotinian sense, and of course degrees of reality. Each level of reality attains to its corresponding level of happiness and these levels will be different in kind —as different in fact as Being is from Becoming. The problem, we may add, is complicated by Plotinus' unwillingness in the later sections of 1.4 to make consciousness a *sine qua non* of happiness, though it may be that; although actual consciousness is not required for the being who is in possession of the fullness of life, yet unless there is the potentiality of some kind of consciousness, there is no νοῦς.

Now if the life which attains possession of the Good is the happy life, we have an answer to the question which Plotinus touches upon at the beginning of 1.4.4: Is the good life, and therefore happiness, possible for men, or is it the possession of the Gods alone? Plotinus hardly argues the point at this stage, contenting himself with saying 'since we say that happiness is also available for human beings', but the reasons for this assertion will be apparent in the discussion in the later sections of the *Ennead*. Yet what we wonder first of all is why Plotinus brings the question up at this stage; and the answer should be sought in the generally Aristotelian framework of the investigation to which we have already alluded. Aristotle is certainly worried in the *Nicomachean Ethics* by the problem of the 'independence' (αὐτάρκεια) of the sage in respect of external goods. We recall the definition of the happy man:[8] 'What then prevents us calling the man happy who functions with perfect excellence, *and who is adequately supplied with external goods?*' And in the account in book four of the 'great-souled man', the Aristotelian saint,[9] we are made aware of the fact that if the wherewithal of liberality were lacking to him, his happiness would decline. Finally in the tenth book we are platonically reminded that it is our duty to attain to immortality *as far as possible*,[10] although the composite nature of man

will ensure that this perfection (and presumably happiness) will be short-lived.

In general the position of Aristotle is that although the truly happy man will be hard to shake from his happiness, this happiness is affected by the presence or absence of external advantages. Hence the fullest happiness would be, in virtually every case, removed to heaven. The Stoics, of course, take the opposite position about externals: only virtue brings happiness; but they also realize that the happy sage is as rare a phenomenon as the phoenix. The problem of externals is fundamental. If happiness is in any way dependent on bodily necessities, then it must ultimately be removed from earth to heaven. As Plotinus imagines his opponent saying at 1.4.5, 'And since pleasure must be counted in towards the happy life, how can one that thus knows the misery of ill fortune or pain be happy, however proficient he be? Such a state, of bliss self-contained (αὐτάρκης), is for the Gods; men, because of the less noble part subjoined in them, must needs seek happiness throughout all their being and not merely in some one part... There is nothing but to cut away the body or the body's sensitive life and so secure that self-contained unity essential to happiness' (trans. MacKenna-Page). Hence one of the chief problems Plotinus has to face in his examination of happiness is the difference between man and God, and the related difficulty (very tricky indeed in the third century A.D.) of the attitude to be taken to the external material world.

Plotinus is in no doubt about his answer. There is no man, he tells us in 1.4.4.10, who does not possess the actuality or potentiality of happiness. How then are we to look at the human psychological situation? If a man is potentially happy, says Plotinus, he has the 'perfect form of life' within him as a part of his total make-up; if he is *actually* happy, this part has been integrated with his whole personality in such a way as to make everything else irrelevant. The sage has become identified with it, and the bodily accessories of human life become simply a kind of clothing which covers the real self.

And if we ask why this clothing is not the real self, the answer is that it can only be made such by an act of the will,[11] and that the true self will not perform such an act. Thus, in the attainment of happiness, what is a part of the unhappy and incomplete man is identified with his essential nature, and this identification (μεταβέβηκε πρὸς τὸ αὐτό, 1.4.4.15) results in the reduction of the rest of his human functions to the position of accidentals. The very language that Plotinus uses to describe these circumstances has its relevance. The body, for the happy man, has become not an essential, but a mere adjunct: it is προσηρτημένον in 1.4.4.27, whereas the elements of the true personality are συνηρτημένα in line 17. We should recall the use of συναρτᾶν with reference to the 'sympathy' of the universe, that is, to the fundamental nature of the world, at 2.3.7.16.

If then by an act of the will the human being becomes identified with his ground and his earthly faculties are reduced to items of clothing, the problem of 'external goods' can be easily solved, as part of the problem of the external world in general. Plotinus is quite willing to call the needs of the body 'necessities' (ἀναγκαῖον, 1.4.4.27), but they are not necessities for the true self. Hence their presence or absence will contribute not to the happiness of the sage but to the continuation or termination of his earthly existence (1.4.7.3). With this the old problem of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) can be solved. Bodily needs, however severe or immediately uncomfortable, are not relevant to human (or divine?) self-sufficiency, and therefore not to happiness. Hence the divorce between happiness and pleasure seems complete, and we find Plotinus asserting that if two men are equally wise and one of them possesses all natural (we might almost say 'worldly') advantages, while the other possesses none, they will be equally happy.[12] Hence too comes the theme, repeated again and again in *Ennead* 1.4, as well as in the treatises on Providence (3.2; 3.3) and elsewhere, that disasters great and small in the world outside will leave the philosopher no less happy. In

1.4.4 we read that the deaths of his family or friends will not affect his happiness,[13] in 1.4.5 that his own death, the deaths of his children and the great calamities that befall the human race will lose their power to affect his true self; in 1.4.8 and 1.4.13 that his own bodily sufferings, even the torments of the much-discussed bull of Phalaris, will still leave him with his essential freedom of action.

We must look a little further into the philosophical basis of this extreme position. Here again, as in so many other of Plotinus' ethical positions, we find that the famous doctrine, frequently alluded to in this book, that part of the soul remains 'above' in the world of Νοῦς, constantly functioning in perfect contemplation of the Forms and unspotted by material life, is at the heart of the difficulty. There is in every man this higher part. In the sage, as we have seen, the self, the whole personality, becomes integrated with that highest self, and the 'material' or lower parts of the soul become irrelevant. Now this higher part of the soul will continue to function regardless of the attitude of the philosopher towards it, and hence of the external sufferings and troubles of the philosopher himself. The whole problem of 1.4 is illuminated by a very important passage in 4.8.8. Here Plotinus is concerned to show that there are activities of our total personality of which we only become aware when we make an effort to grasp them by our perceptive faculties or by the discursive reason. He gives desire as an example. Desire which remains in our desiring faculty, he says, is known to us when we grasp it by our own perceptive faculty within, or by our discursive reason, or by both. This principle leads us excellently into the question of consciousness to which we should now turn.

When in 1.4.5 he is considering the miseries that may affect the external life of the sage without disturbing his inner tranquillity, Plotinus alludes to the possible loss of consciousness due to drugs or illness; and the same question occurs at the opening of 1.4.9. In both cases the Greek phraseology is comparable: εἰ δὲ δὴ μηδ' ἑαυτῷ παρακολουθοῖ (1.4.5.2);

ὅταν μὴ παρακολουθῇ (1.4.9.1).[14] Plotinus is in no doubt as to the situation. Such loss of consciousness is irrelevant to the happiness of the sage—and his argument to demonstrate the fact is interesting as well as curious and anti-Aristotelian. We will recall that in the *De Anima* Aristotle distinguishes between the first and second actuality of a living body.[15] When a man is asleep he is said to have the same powers as when he is awake (otherwise his continuous identity would be lost) but to be holding them in abeyance. Asleep he has a second actuality; awake a first. The comparison is drawn between the presence of knowledge and its exercise. Clearly the man who is not actually thinking that two and two are four has not ceased to know the truth of that proposition.

Despite Aristotle, however, Plotinus refuses to recognize the different actuality of virtue and happiness in the man awake and the man asleep. If a man is unconscious of the fact that he is healthy, he argues in 1.4.9, this does not prevent him from being healthy; if he is unaware of his personal attraction, that does not mean that he is not personally attractive;[16] similarly he argues that if he is unaware of his wisdom, surely he must be equally wise. But, we might object, wisdom depends on its exercise and consciousness of itself as part of itself. Here however the doctrine of the higher part of the soul is invoked. Wisdom is itself a kind of reality (ὑπόστασις ἐν οὐσίᾳ τινί) and naturally no existent can cease to exist, or share in any way in the transience of the world of becoming and of change. This reality, therefore, this νοῦς within the philosopher, must itself be eternal and unchanging, thus remaining quite unmoved by the phenomena of consciousness or insensibility.

Yet there seem to be considerable difficulties here. Plotinus tells us in 1.4.9.24–5 that when consciousness lapses the continuing wisdom of the sage is separated not from his whole self but from a part. It has been argued earlier, however, as we recall, that for the sage the divine element, the νοῦς, is in fact the whole personality, and that what had previously been

parts of his being are reduced to the level of mere accessories. It is hard to see how, if the sage when suffering loss of consciousness possesses once again a divisible self, Plotinus is not contradicting the previous tenor of his argument and suggesting strongly that the philosopher can lose his philosophical happiness. And yet he does not mean to suggest this, for his whole point is that happiness and the wisdom of the higher self will continue regardless of the transient phenomena of consciousness.

And there is a further difficulty which cannot be neglected at this stage. If consciousness is ultimately irrelevant to the achieved happiness of the sage, and if, furthermore, there is in every man a higher self which lives eternally 'above' and is engaged in contemplation of the Forms, why should we not say that every man is equally happy? The answer to this question certainly cannot be, as we might have hoped, that happiness is the state achieved by the philosopher when he integrates his personality with the higher self and reduces the bodily aspects of the soul to the position of mere accessories, for Plotinus has now suggested that this integration can to some extent be reversed. The only answer seems to be the extremely paradoxical, but perhaps no less Plotinian position that everyone is in fact happy all the time, while the difference between the philosopher and the rest of mankind is that he is aware of the fact while they are not. This would certainly justify the apparent separation of pleasure from happiness that we noticed early in the discussion—as well as demonstrate the truly philosophic significance of the Delphic tag 'Know thyself'. Furthermore it would harmonize with the sections on happiness and consciousness in 1.4.10 where we learn that when the soul is quiet, then the images of our true happiness can be reflected in consciousness. And as we should expect and shall shortly show from this *Ennead* itself, the philosopher is a man of curiously and wondrously calm pleasures.

There is therefore in all men (perhaps stronger in the philosopher?) a force which engenders happiness and is outside

the control of the conscious personality. This force must be regarded at least partially as the will. It is a misuse of the word 'willing' (βούλησις), Plotinus tells us at 1.4.6.14ff., to suppose that it is the mere craving for the necessities of material life. By βούλησις Plotinus seems to mean in his discussion in *Enneads* 1.4 and 1.5 something we might call an 'instinct for survival', though by survival he would understand the survival of what is able to survive, namely the νοῦς. Will would then be the ground of reality in an immortal thing, and thus inevitably associated with the first cause of life, namely the One. As Plotinus says at the opening of 1.5.2 'we always desire life and activity'; and as we have already seen at 1.4.4.16 the 'accessories' of our higher life are not present through our own will (οὐκ ἐθέλοντι). This higher life, on the other hand, is the truly willed life (οὗτος ὁ βουλητὸς ὄντως βίος).[17]

If then we revert to 1.4.4 we can summarize the position we have reached. Plotinus is arguing in that section, as we discussed earlier, that every man possesses happiness either potentially or actually. Our present suggestion is that in some sense every man possesses it actually, since the higher self 'above' is present to the whole of mankind. Yet if we look a little closer at *Ennead* 1.4.4 we shall realize that it does not contradict our solution. Clearly for the man who possesses happiness 'in actuality' no problem arises: he is happy. The difficulty would seem to be in the case of the man who only possesses it potentially. But Plotinus shows as he continues in this chapter that he is giving us a rather unusual interpretation of the notions of potency and act. It is not the case in this chapter that the man whose life contains the thing which causes happiness, namely the Good, only possesses happiness potentially. This 'potentially' happy man also possesses the Good—and thus his higher self is happy—yet he is not wholly identified with it in his conscious self. Thus potential happiness in this chapter does not imply that a man is not actually happy, but that his happiness has not yet banished the transient dis-

tractions of sense to the bodily limbo in which they belong. If this use of the language of potency and actuality seems peculiar, we should remember that the 'standard' use of the terms is not the invention of Plotinus but of Aristotle; and Plotinus is never the man to allow himself to be put off by terminological problems of this sort.

We have noticed already the separation of happiness from pleasure, as pleasure is normally understood in the ancient world. We must now turn to 1.4.12, where, as so often, Plotinus goes back on his own language and reintroduces terms—with new meanings—which he has rigorously excluded before. Chapter twelve begins in a partly predictable, partly unusual way: 'When people ask about what is pleasant (τὸ ἡδύ) in the life of the sage, they will not suppose that he should enjoy any of the pleasures of the debauchee or of the body—these cannot be present and they are destructive of happiness—or even extreme emotional pleasures of any kind.' In view of what we have already seen Plotinus' attitude to pleasure to be, it is certainly not surprising that the philosopher should enjoy none of these pleasures. What is striking, however, is the idea of Plotinus' considering 'the pleasant' in general as having any relevance to the life of the philosopher. We are only to expect that some new and unearthly type of pleasure with strange metaphysical characteristics will be introduced.

The pleasure which the philosopher will enjoy is, in Plotinus' words, 'in the presence of what is good'. Inevitably, therefore, it will be unchanging and perfect (οὐκ ἐν κινήσεσιν οὖσας, οὐδὲ γινομένας). It is a static pleasure (ἔστηκε τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ τὸ ἵλεων τοῦτο) which makes the philosopher cheerful and his life untroubled and immovably happy (ἵλεως δὲ ὁ σπουδαῖος ἀεὶ καὶ κατάστασις ἥσυχος οὐκ ἀγαπητὴ ἡ διάθεσις ἦν οὐδὲν τῶν λεγομένων κακῶν παρακινεῖ). It is a pleasure markedly different from those pleasures of motion and generation to which Plato refers in the *Republic* and *Philebus*.[18]

Plato does not commit himself to the view put forward in

the *Philebus* that pleasure is a process of generation, but clearly he has a certain sympathy for it. Aristotle, on the other hand, corrects it explicitly in his discussions of pleasure in both books seven and ten of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[19] There are those who suppose, he tells us, that all pleasure is a 'process of perception leading to a natural state'. This view, identified plausibly by Burnet as that of Speusippus, is clearly related to that attributed by Plato to the κομψοί in the *Philebus*, but Aristotle thinks it inadequately argued. In both his discussions of the problem he denies that pleasure is any kind of movement or process; in both he agrees in a sense that it is complete in itself. In book seven he regards it as an 'unimpeded activity of the natural state', while in book ten it is the inevitable accompaniment of activity in creatures endowed with any power of perception.

Now if one were to look at Aristotle's definition of pleasure with the eyes of a Platonist, one would be approaching the position of Plotinus. Plotinus knows from Plato himself, from the *Republic* and the *Philebus*, that there are 'true' and 'false' pleasures, that 'true' pleasures are the pleasures to be derived from Being and knowledge of Being, and that 'false' pleasures are the deceptive joys, mingled with pains, which the body experiences when it eats, drinks and copulates. Hence Plotinus is able to understand Aristotle's definition of pleasure as applicable to the Platonic 'true' pleasures. Such pleasures are not movements; they are static and concerned with goods, as Plotinus tells us in 1.4.12 itself. There is therefore all the difference between Being and Becoming between the pleasure of the philosopher—true pleasure—and that of the ordinary man. There will appear as a result to be little difference between true pleasure and happiness itself; indeed Plotinus could hardly object to our saying 'Happiness is pleasant', provided we meant truly pleasant. The point is made quite explicitly in 1.5.4: 'But pleasure could not be rightly counted in with happiness. But if we were to say that pleasure is an unimpeded activity (as in the seventh book of Aristotle's

Ethics), then that pleasure is the same as the happiness we are looking for.'

In view of all that we have seen, it will come as no surprise that in 1.5 Plotinus argues that there is no connection between happiness and the lengths of time in which it is commonly supposed to be enjoyed. Happiness is a condition of the immaterial, and if earlier in our discussion we have spoken as though it had any connection with temporal duration, this must be regarded as metaphorical language useful for the purposes of exposition only. We have seen happiness as the activity of the higher self being realized in such a way as to be unaffected by material, bodily and worldly changes. It is not to be measured on a time-scale any more than are the Forms, the kinds of Being itself. It shares their timeless repose and gives their unearthly joys. In the sage it can be recognized by the conscious personality and at those moments the sage enjoys a glimpse of what Plato called 'the place beyond the heavens' where dwell the eternal archetypes of beauty and truth. The sage in fact, when recognizing his own happiness, has a taste of eternity.[20]

The matter is best expressed in Plotinus' own words at 1.5.7.24ff.: 'We must not link Being with non-Being, time—even everlasting time—with eternity...the life of eternity is not composed of many periods of time, but is entirely compact and outside all time.' The happiness of the philosopher is an awakening from the world of time and becoming, and an identification with the world of eternity and Being and true pleasure.[21]

12

THE SELF AND OTHERS

'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' is a commandment almost as difficult to understand as to perform. It is not the equivalent of 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and not thyself'. A man who had no love of himself of any kind would probably not manage to live for very long. If he did not die of boredom, he would probably commit suicide. Despite this difficulty, needless to say, there have been persons to interpret the saying in this fashion and to brand those who disagree with them as 'eudaimonists', which is theological for 'hedonists'.

An ancient thinker would have found the saying difficult for the opposite reason. His question might well have been: 'How can you love your neighbour as yourself?' If a man loves something, he might reason, he will seek to achieve the greatest benefits for the object of his love. But, he would continue, I am able to do myself a far greater benefit than I could possibly do anyone else. How then is the commandment intelligible? And if we were to ask this philosopher what he means by saying he can benefit himself in this marvellous way, he might reply that he can make himself independent of fortune, or able to be happy on the rack or free from the fear of death, or able to attain union with God. None of these things can he do for anyone else. Indeed too much of an attempt to do them would not only fail of its purpose in helping the other person, but it would also detract from the happiness of the doer. Hence it could only be regarded as futile. It is in this light that we should attempt to understand what Inge has called the 'hardness' of ancient ethics.[1] We, with our philanthropic theories, if not practices, find what has been called the self-absorption of the ancient sage offensive to our hypocrisy. We have a stock reaction of distaste for the man who frankly

admits that his main concern in life is the improvement of himself, even if we do the same without saying so. All this makes it the more essential to understand the tendency to detachment from the world in the ancient thinkers. When we understand their position, we shall be able to criticize. Until we achieve this understanding, we can only flatter our own self-esteem. Let us therefore examine briefly what Plotinus thinks about the goal of human life, the providential arrangement of the world and the relation of the philosopher to his fellow men.

Plotinus frequently alludes to the remark of Plato in the *Theaetetus* that the good for man is to attain likeness to God as far as he can.[2] And he is in little doubt as to how this end is to be achieved. The philosopher is to practice the moral virtues, to follow the path laid down by Diotima in the *Symposium* for all true lovers of beauty, to contemplate the eternal values, and from there to await the vision of the one source of Being and Truth.[3] The possibility of this ascent of the soul is justified metaphysically for Plotinus by his doctrine that a part of the soul remains for ever in contemplation of the eternal Forms and is not immersed in the doubtfully moral flux of the visible world.[4] There is therefore in every individual what Plotinus regards as an 'outer man', which is concerned with the everyday details of life, and an inner man, to whom the philosopher seeks to return, who is immersed in the contemplation of reality. As philosophers, therefore, our whole aim is to develop the inner life at the expense of the outer. When we leave our bodily existence behind, we shall be altogether free of bodily disturbances, and, like the Gods, we shall live a life of pure contemplation. Let us look at a few of the passages where Plotinus teaches these ideas. As we do so, we shall see the 'hardness' that Inge speaks of as a feature of ancient ethics making its appearance.

The treatise on Beauty (1.6) is perhaps the part of Plotinus most obviously influenced by the description of the ascent of the soul in the *Symposium*. In the ninth chapter we read as

follows: 'Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful. He cuts away here, he smoothes there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work' (trans. MacKenna-Page).[5] Inge rightly remarks that this is a very typical passage of the *Enneads*.[6] It is the task of every man, as Plotinus puts it elsewhere (2.9.9.26ff.), to strive to make himself perfect. And he must recognize that he is not the only one capable of achieving this end. Some have done so already. And indeed, although Plotinus does not specifically say so here, everyone has this potentiality of excellence. We might expect, from this community of purpose which Plotinus sets before all men, that concern for others would be of importance to the philosopher, but that, as we shall see, is only true in a rather special sense.

The search for perfection is the determination that the inner man shall wholly dominate the personality. Hence the would-be philosopher will be moving along the path of progress when he ceases to be concerned with the misfortunes that happen to the 'outer man' who lives among the concerns of the visible world. The real man is immortal. What does it matter to him if he suffers injustice (2.9.9.15)? If he is put to death, he has attained his desire to be free of the body. It was Socrates in the *Phaedo* (64c), we should recall, who described philosophy itself as a practice for death.

If the inner man can neglect the troubles of the visible world in this way, he is free from the domination of the passions—a state much prized by the Stoics. The 'outer man', and he whose whole character is determined by externals, will therefore retain vivid memories, not unmixed with emotion, of his friends and wife and children; the inner man and the sage will recall these things in tranquillity.[7] He will be as little concerned for their physical fate as he will be for his own. This is made clear more than once: in 1.4.8, after Plotinus tells us that the philosopher will ask for no pity for himself, whatever be the hardships which come upon him, he continues by

applying the same strictness to the sufferings of others. It is weakness of soul to allow feelings of pity to reach the 'inner man'. Proof of this, he says, is that men often reckon it a gain to die before hearing of the misfortunes of those around them. But this is rather concern for our own peace of mind than for the happiness of others.

On this point we would sympathize with Plotinus. Not to hear of others' misfortunes is scarcely to be regarded as an act of charity. But we find the further claim more difficult to tolerate, namely that only the outer man is affected by others' sufferings, especially as Plotinus goes on to say that it is erroneous to suppose that it is natural to be sorrowful over these sufferings. The truth, in his view, is that such is not the nature of the best of men, for it is the task of virtue to direct the whole man in accordance with his best self—and that best self, it seems, is impervious.[8] As we read in 1.4.11.12–14: 'The sage would like all men to prosper and no one to suffer evil, but if this does not happen, he is still happy.'

Ennead 1.4.13 presents the paradox that his own physical suffering even in the most extreme form is of no importance to the sage. Even inside the bull of Phalaris, a notorious engine of torture, there is some part of the sage which is unaffected. Here perhaps Plotinus' attitude comes out best of all. He does not deny that the 'lodging' in the bull is painful, but this does not seem to concern him so long as the higher part of the soul is not deprived of the vision of the Good. And of that it cannot, of course, be deprived. Extrapolating from other passages of the *Enneads*, we may be sure that Plotinus would speak of others' sufferings in the same light as of a man's own. The self would certainly not be less important than other people.

The aim of the philosophic life, as we have seen, is to free the soul from the body and bring it back to its source in the One. For this everything in the external life should be sacrificed. Virtue, as we learn in particular from *Ennead* 1.2, is an aspect of the Intelligible World. Hence it is not ultimately concerned with the visible. As Plotinus puts it in 6.8.6,

'Virtue does not follow upon occurrences as a saver of the imperilled; at its discretion it sacrifices a man; it may decree the jettison of life, means, children, country even; it looks to its own high aim and not to the safeguarding of anything lower. Thus our freedom of act, our self-disposal, must be referred not to the doing, not to the external thing done but to the inner activity, to the Intellection, to virtue's own vision' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

Virtue then is quite literally its own reward. It is a kind of intellectual life higher than that life which concerns itself with one's children or one's country. These, as Plotinus puts it again in 3.2.15, are matters for the 'outer man'. We shall have more to say about this chapter of the treatise on Providence later; here we may concentrate exclusively on the 'inner' and 'outer' man. We must in our inner selves look upon the changing calamities of life, on murder, or war, or the destruction of cities, as simply the changing scenes of a play. Man is an actor who in his many lives plays many parts. At his lower level he is continually, as it were, wearing new garb. Such matters are basically frivolous and the inner man is not concerned with them. 'All this is the doing of man having no more than to live the lower and outer life, and never perceiving that, in his weeping and in his graver doings alike, he is but at play; to handle austere matters austerely is reserved for the thoughtful: the other kind of man is himself a futility. Those incapable of thinking gravely read gravity into frivolities which correspond to their own frivolous nature. Anyone that joins in their trifling and so comes to look on life with their eyes must understand that by lending himself to such idleness he has laid aside his own character. If Socrates himself takes part in the trifling, he trifles in the outer Socrates' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

Such then are the inner and outer selves, the metaphysical bases for Plotinus' thought about the self and his fellow humans. The outer self must not attempt to inflict its concerns on the inner; rather it must, in the sage, be prepared to sub-

ordinate itself. We can see from a passage in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* how this inner detachment appeared to work out in actual life. Plotinus was able to live, says Porphyry,[9] with other people and with himself at the same time. The next chapter gives some idea of what this living with other people meant. It meant, for example, acting as guardian of the children of a number of people who at their deaths asked him to undertake this task because they knew their children would be in good hands. Plotinus apparently devoted much time and trouble to this work, but, says Porphyry, it did not prevent him all the time being intent on the higher world of intellect—an intentness which in both chapters eight and nine we learn was never relaxed during his waking hours. As we would put it, Plotinus was apparently able to live at two levels, and to continue his meditations quite undistracted by the activities of his lower or outer self.

But we have still only touched on the edge of the problem. It is the 'outer self' which will feel pity for others, but we may wonder why in a providentially arranged world such pity is necessary at all. Hence we come to the attempts Plotinus makes to show that since the 'higher cares for the lower' in the world, there is nothing we can experience which is outside the control of Providence. Now we should of course expect Plotinus to defend Providence; the ancients would have regarded him as an atheist, like the Epicureans, if he did not. We recall from the tenth book of the *Laws* that the man who believes in Gods but does not accept the providential ordering of the cosmos is more of a blasphemer than he who disallows the Gods altogether. And the Stoics too had gone to great, and sometimes absurd, lengths to show in detail how Providence actually worked out. Plotinus follows their lead,[10] adapting, repeating or improving as he sees fit. We are not concerned here, however, with how he used his sources, but with what he actually said, and with the difficulties in which, like everyone else who tackles this subject, he managed to involve himself.

Plotinus is in no doubt that the wicked suffer and that it is

good and just that this is so.[11] He is no more concerned about the fate of those who do not trouble to look after themselves. When a band of young ruffians attacks and robs young men who never bother to go to the gymnasium and develop their strength, Plotinus remarks that as far as the victims are concerned, nothing more is called for than laughter.[12] If bad men are rulers, he continues, there is some indication that the subjects are paying the penalty for their own feebleness. Here perhaps we have the strongest of all examples of the ancient tendency to make a man personally responsible for all that he does and suffers.[13]

But the real problem arises when we see just men suffering more than unjust, and here Plotinus is clearly in some difficulty. There is a tendency in the *Enneads* to account the evils that befall parts of the cosmos to the good of the whole. People do not complain about a painter, says Plotinus (3.2.11), if when he paints a picture it is not equally beautiful all over. Nor do they expect that the characters in a play will all be heroes. The mixture of inferior parts may contribute to the excellence of the whole. And if in the present the workings of Providence seem unjust, we should look to the past or future (3.2.13). Perhaps it is the wrongdoings of a past life that are now being atoned for.

Yet this answer does not always satisfy Plotinus. He raises the question of the sufferings of the just 'outside justice' again in 4.3.16. Here a number of possibilities are offered as solutions: that they are the reward of past wrongdoing (this is regarded as not always adequate as an explanation); that they are simply accidents (this is impossible in an ordered universe); that they are not really injustices even to the innocent sufferer. This last view is the one Plotinus favours here—and perhaps is generally his preferred explanation. If the sufferer is a good man, he believes, misfortunes and apparent injustices are really providential. He admits that this does not seem to be the case, but supposes that this is because we are unable to fathom the workings of God's Providence.

At any rate, from the sage's point of view, appearances are saved. There is no real injustice in the world. When the unjust man suffers, he is paying for his injustice; when the just man suffers, his suffering is unreal (i.e. affects only the outer self). Here we have the typically Plotinian tendency to push a paradox into its most extreme form, for behind all this it is hard not to detect the Socrates of Plato's *Gorgias* maintaining how much better it is to be wronged than to wrong one's fellows. Thus for Plotinus, when the unjust man wrongs the just, it is really himself that he is wronging.

In 3.2.13, however, Plotinus prefers another of his three solutions, namely that suffering is the penalty for past misdeeds. Retribution (ἀδράστεια) will follow at last upon crime; no one is a slave by chance; the slave may have once abused his power as a free man; no one is unjustly murdered; he himself was once a murderer. The fact that the victim suffers his deserts in such cases, however, does not absolve the killer of guilt. He is behaving unjustly—and thus punishing himself. And doubtless in time he will suffer a like fate also.

Yet whichever way Plotinus explains the sufferings of the just, the result of his explanation is the same. The suffering is only an apparent injustice. Really it is justice. Hence it need call out no pity in the sage. The sage is not concerned with his own fate, nor do the trivialities in the lives of others worry his inner self. The fact that others are killed in the theatre of life is of no more concern than if the sage himself is killed (3.2.15). The relentless logic of the position is perhaps best expressed in *Ennead* 1.4.7, from which it is worth quoting at length: 'In any case if the man that has attained felicity meets some turn of fortune that he would not have chosen, there is not the slighest lessening of his happiness for that. If there were, his felicity would be veering or falling from day to day; the death of a child would bring him down, or the loss of some trivial possession. No: a thousand mischances and disappointments may befall him and leave him still in the tranquil possession of the Term.

But, they say, great disasters, not the petty daily chances. What human thing, then, is great, so as not to be despised by one who has mounted above all we know here, and is bound now no longer to anything below?

If the Proficient thinks all fortunate events, however momentous, to be no great matter—kingdom and the rule over cities and people, colonizations and the founding of states, even though all be his own handiwork—how can he take any great account of the vacillations of power or the ruin of his fatherland? Certainly if he thought any such events a great disaster, or any disaster at all, he must be of a very strange way of thinking. One that sets great store by wood and stones, or, by Zeus, by mortality among mortals cannot yet be the Proficient, whose estimate of death, we hold, must be that it is better than life in the body' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

All this, we should notice, is not intended to represent the wise man as unconcerned with friendship and harsh. Plotinus makes the point specifically (1.4.15.21). On the contrary, his very detachment from the world and its worries will make him the best of friends. His friendship will be that of the 'inner man' as well as the 'outer' (1.1.10.15). All that he has he will share with his friends. And he will be able to share better than other men. What he has to share—we know now that it is not a common sadness over human misfortunes—will shortly appear.

The man who concentrates on the inner life is the man who lives at the level of Νοῦς. He too is the virtuous man, for as the treatise on the virtues (1.2) itself tells us, the highest virtues themselves are modes of the intellect and its life.[14] While we may find this subordination of the goods of the active life to contemplation difficult to accept, we should observe that Plotinus at least manages to avoid what seems to us a particularly unpleasant side of ancient practical virtue. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle remarks more than once that the man of practical goodness needs a sphere of operation outside himself.[15] The just man needs other persons towards whom he

can act justly; and the temperate and brave men are in similar positions. How can the temperate man show his virtue if he has no opportunity for intemperance?[16]—for, says Aristotle, it is disputed whether the intention to be virtuous or the virtuous act is the more important, and perfect virtue will comprise both intention and act. The logical conclusion of all this, though fortunately not one drawn by Aristotle, is that the virtuous man will look forward to the prospect of others' misfortunes with some pleasure, since they will afford him a chance to display his own excellence. Plotinus alludes to this attitude on at least two occasions: at 1.4.8.27 he asks straightforwardly whether the philosopher desires misfortunes, and answers that it is precisely because they are undesired that he displays his virtue in facing them with equanimity and an untroubled spirit; and in 6.8.5, after remarking that exterior circumstances are always necessary before a display of moral virtue can be made, he wonders whether virtue would choose opportunities for self-display if it could. But the answer he gives is that just as a doctor like Hippocrates would, if he could choose, prefer not to have to exercise his skill, so the virtuous man would be happy to remain inactive if there was no need for the application of his finer qualities.

If we ask why Plotinus is able to say this, what is the metaphysical basis of his position, the answer will be that which we have given to an earlier question, namely that practical virtue, exercised or not, is only an affair of the outer man. The virtue of the inner man is the contemplation of the divine Forms—and to that we must return.

Since the philosopher is concerned with the inner man, and the sufferings of the outer man are illusory, how does the philosopher show his friendship for his fellows? Or is he wholly detached from them, seeking by himself a return to the One? In a sense the philosopher is wholly detached from his fellows. He is seeking to return to his cause; it is a question of the flight of the philosopher's soul, alone and free from all externals, to

the uniqueness of the One. Translated into more familiar terminology, this means that the return of the soul is dependent on nothing but itself. The soul of the philosopher has achieved the independence (αὐτάρκεια) for which all Greek thinkers sought. There is a recognition here that each man is ultimately responsible for himself, that each man's troubles are his own and each man's decision can only be made by himself. And each man, for Plotinus, has the *power* to make his own decisions. His soul has been providentially designed to be of such a kind as to be able to make the journey back without any additional help from the One. All that is required is for man to make the effort.[17] This being so, there would be, for Plotinus, only one real way of helping one's fellows, namely by showing them that such effort is possible and worth while, and by helping them to help themselves along the road the philosopher must travel. In other words, the real way to help other people is by teaching (6.9.7.22).

But, we might say, why bother to teach anyone else? Surely for Plotinus all that should matter is one's own successful career of contemplation. There is no explicit answer to any such query in the *Enneads*, but the lines on which Plotinus tackles it are perhaps not unclear. There is a harmony in the whole of the universe. All things derive from the One and are, in Plotinus' language, in the One. All souls are striving to greater or less degrees to return to him. When any individual soul returns and is joined in communion with its source, it must be presumed to share in its source's creativity and causal energy. In other words, each soul will become responsible in its way for the creation and maintenance of all things. It will even love all things in so far as all things contain the principle of unity, for the One loves itself both in itself and in the rest of the cosmos.[18]

We know that the return of the soul is to be explained by the principle of 'like to like'. The soul is like the One, and the more it is purified the more it resembles the One's simplicity. Hence even before it achieves the union with its source which

it seeks, it will be trying to act in a manner appropriate to the One. It will be sharing the One's omnipresence in so far as it can, and it will be always turned towards others, knowing that once they turn towards the One, they will be led back on the path to union.

What higher motive could prompt a man to teach? If at first sight it appears that Plotinus was acting against his principles in setting up a philosophical school, we now see that this action itself was philosophical. Philosophizing for its own sake is a concept unintelligible to Plotinus. Nor would he suppose that there could be any point in talking about philosophy without teaching something or learning something. When a man reaches the stage of setting up his own school, his job is to lead others along the path he himself has followed. Hence he finds no incentive to lecture to people as well-versed as himself. This is doubtless the attitude to which Porphyry refers when he relates that once during a discussion at the school Plotinus' former fellow-student Origen appeared in the audience.[19] As soon as Plotinus saw him he wished to conclude his lecture, for, he said, his enthusiasm waned when he found himself talking to people who knew what he was going to say.

Such then was Plotinus' motive for teaching and such were the benefits he believed the philosopher could confer. Teaching is the real act of kindness, while concern for the lower aspects of one's fellows is often pointless sentimentalism. If it can be indulged without harm to the self—even though it is of no real benefit to other people—perhaps the philosopher can indulge in it, but generally it is distracting to a man in search of higher things. There are, as we know, two parts of the soul, and it is philosophical kindness to care for the higher, both in oneself and in other people. But, we may say, what about those who are not yet on the path to a philosophic life? Has the philosopher no kind of responsibility for them? Here Plotinus' own practice is in apparent contradiction with his theory, for Porphyry tells us that Plotinus believed that it was

most important that he should protect the property of the children who were given over into his charge on the death of their parents.[20] Until these young people turn to the philosophic life, he said, their property should be kept carefully for them. And, of course, Plotinus devoted as much energy to their upbringing and education as to the preservation of their property. It is hard to see this as the activity of a man devoted exclusively to the rôles of teacher and self-improver. His assertion in *Ennead* 1.4.15 that the philosopher is not unfriendly or harsh is here well borne out in his own person.

Porphyry, as we saw earlier, goes on to remark that, even while Plotinus was involved in these practical activities, his devotion to the higher world was unwavering. This cannot imply that he supposed that if Plotinus were a better philosopher he would have ceased to bother about such 'worldly' things, for Plotinus is for Porphyry the perfect philosopher. The difficulty we seem to be involved with here is part of the larger problem of the nature of the soul and its functions. Soul, for Plotinus, has two concerns: contemplation of its source, and the creation and providential organization of the visible world. And these two functions are not easily reconcilable. The reasons for the clash are obvious: the ultimate care of the individual is to obtain complete freedom from the cycle of births and deaths and to live perpetually on the spiritual plane; the material world, though to be defended against, for example, the Gnostics,[21] as the best such world possible, and though full of beauty, is inferior to the World of Forms, the soul's true home; matter, though morally neutral in itself, can have a seductive effect on the souls that are organizing it and can thus lead to their 'fall from grace', their desire to forget their fatherland and live selfish lives cut off from their source and their good.[22] Yet despite this, as we have explained elsewhere,[23] there is a difference between Νοῦς and Soul, and even the lower soul is an eternal reality. Nevertheless, although always admitting this, Plotinus tries to look over his shoulder, as it were, and wish that reality came to an end at

the level of Noῦς. It seems that the apparent conflict between Plotinus' practice and his theory about the way in which the philosopher can and should help his fellows arises precisely out of this ambiguity. Helping one's fellows at the material level is an act of the soul not of the contemplative variety, but of the organizing and providential variety.

We may conclude therefore that just as Plotinus admitted the beauty of the visible world, while still holding it to be an 'unreal' beauty, so he admitted that practical help should be given to one's fellow humans while at the same time supposing that the problems he was helping to solve were unreal problems. Thus if he ever supposed it was not the philosopher's concern to act in such matters, he was as good as saying that the lesser goods of the visible world were no goods at all. We should recall at this point that he is undoubtedly the victim of Plato's divided thoughts on these problems. Is the true philosopher the dualistically-minded ascetic of the *Phaedo* or the interested dissector of the marvels of the visible world of the *Timaeus*?

But perhaps it could be said that in the course of this discussion we have moved on from the question of Plotinus' attitude to the sufferings or apparent sufferings of humanity to the question of whether in practice he felt inclined to help his fellow men. Perhaps the truth is that, like the Stoics, Plotinus recognized the troubles of man and sought to help out of a sense of duty rather than out of pity or any more tender emotion. This attitude would appear to have some Platonic authority also, for in the seventh book of the *Republic* it is through the recognition of their duty that the philosophers go back into the Cave. But Plotinus is not parallel to either Plato or the Stoics here. The virtues, for Plotinus, at their highest, are purely contemplative. There is no going back into the Cave out of a sense of duty. But in that case why does Plotinus help forward the interests of the 'outer man' in other people?

As we have observed elsewhere, Plotinus' thought,[24] like

Plato's, is on these matters somewhat contradictory. We have no alternative but to notice a conflict of theory with theory, and theory with practice. The theory of the self-sufficiency of the sage *should* preclude him from all communal interests except that of teaching, while the theory of the union of the self with the One and the submerging of our own lives and activities in the life and activity of the One should lead to an outgoing attitude of the personality in the form of creativeness and care at all levels. And this care should be motivated not by a sense of duty but by something like a father's concern for his children (2.9.16.8), for the One is our true fatherland. Theoretically such care would distract the soul; but again theoretically it would enable the soul to perform its functions to the full. In theory the sage's only concern should be with teaching; in practice Plotinus both teaches those who can be taught and helps those who are not able to enter upon the path of philosophy so that they may avoid troubles which (in theory) are illusory in any case.

Here then we have one of the most striking of all Plotinus' paradoxes. In theory the way up and the way down are, if not identical, at least inseparable parts of the same process: contemplation implies creation; creation implies contemplation. In practice Plotinus again and again comes near to wishing that all movement were upward, though he recognizes that this is not so and it is not right that it should be so. He is, if we may generalize his predicament, entrapped by his own philosophical ancestry. If he could have recognized clearly and explicitly that even if the sufferer benefits from his suffering, even, for that matter, if the self benefits from its suffering, nevertheless it is still virtuous not only to help but to sympathize, he would have resolved the problem. He is entrapped by the fear that sympathy will disturb the urge to contemplation—though he need not be since the higher self always remains above. Although the ultimate end is to transcend the self (οὐδ' ὅλως αὐτός, 6.9.11.11), yet the traditional Greek desire for independence of spirit prevents Plotinus from wholly

seeing that one means of achieving precisely this end is to admit openly that all men are brothers, all deriving from the same One, all striving for the same goal; in fact that one path to union with the One is through supporting *both* the inner and the outer man in his fellows. One of the most fascinating things about Plotinus is that in this sphere of activity his practice has outrun his theory. In practice he has recognized that concern for others does not entail the withdrawal of the mind from higher things and its submergence in the lower. The Plotinian soul is a subtle instrument; it can contemplate the higher and care for the lower at the same time. Yet Plotinus has not recognized the full significance of his own theory. Here is one example of the accepted fact that he stands with one foot in the ancient world, with the other outside it.

13

THE ORIGINALITY OF PLOTINUS

'It is necessary to take the notable opinions of the ancients and consider whether any of them agree with ours.' (*Enneads* 3.7.7.15)

It will not have escaped the reader's attention that, in discussing various ideas of Plotinus, it has apparently been necessary to refer frequently to those of earlier thinkers, especially Plato. He may therefore have begun to wonder at times either whether Plotinus can stand on his own feet, or why, if he cannot, he is worth serious attention. If he then looks at the *apparatus fontium* of Henry and Schwyzer's edition of the *Enneads*, he may find his worst fears confirmed when he sees the lists of quotations from Plato, Aristotle, or von Arnim's *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. Then continuing his increasingly embarrassed search he will turn to the largest recent book on Plotinus and observe its title *Les Sources de Plotin*.[1] Here he will find admirable articles dealing with the indebtedness of Plotinus to Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Numenius, Ammonius, Alexander of Aphrodisias and many others. And a summary of the results of this same work will confront him in page after page of Henry's introduction to the third edition of MacKenna's translation of the *Enneads*.[2] At this stage he will begin to feel that, despite the cautions of Harder,[3] Plotinus is being dissolved into his sources, that is, suffering the fate of the philosophic Cicero. And the more percipient he is and the more he becomes involved in his source-hunting, the more he will find that the names of dim and almost forgotten figures seem to dominate the surviving text. What will be left for Plotinus when we have 'recovered' the philosophies of Posidonius and Ammonius Saccas? The enquirer may begin to feel that just as the archaeologist often

seems a man for whom Praxiteles' chisel is more exciting than his Hermes, so Plotinus' modern critics are more concerned with his 'raw materials', his background, than with his own philosophical positions. And these philosophical positions may begin to appear wholly unoriginal in the process.

It is not my intention to suggest that the eminent scholars I have mentioned, many of whom have so notably contributed to the greatly increased interest in Plotinus that has come about in recent years, wished to do anything more by their investigations into sources than further the understanding of Plotinus himself. Nevertheless, there still appears to be some need to attempt a further estimate of the true position of Plotinus in regard to his sources and in particular to Plato, to whose inspiration he is so greatly indebted. The following remark of Henry's will form a suitable beginning: 'Plotinus would have been surprised at being thought of as the founder of a new school, Neoplatonism. He considered himself a Platonist pure and simple, without prefix or qualification—in other words, as an interpreter and follower of Plato. Plato, in his view, possessed the truth, the whole truth.' We can see from this remark that our own enquiry will have to attempt the answers to at least three questions: Does Plotinus regard himself solely as an interpreter of Plato? Does Plato, in Plotinus' view, possess the whole truth? If Plato and Plotinus differ, is Plotinus aware of the differences and how does he account for them?

In the course of our investigation we shall consider not only the writings of Plato, but those of Aristotle, the Stoics and the other 'sources' as well. Here our task will be easier, for the habit has not arisen of referring to Plotinus as a neo-Aristotelian[4] or a neo-Stoic. Nevertheless the attitude Plotinus adopts towards these thinkers may be helpful in our assessment of the fundamental problem of his attitude to Plato and the estimate we make of his originality in general. It will be best therefore if we begin with the passages of Porphyry's *Life* which deal with the attitude of Plotinus to all

previous writers and with his biographer's view of his originality,[5] before looking first at his attitude to the Middle Platonists, Stoics and Aristotelians, and then to Plato himself.

Porphyry tells us that, at his philosophical seminars, Plotinus' procedure was to have various treatises read aloud, and he mentions a number of Middle Platonists and Peripatetics whose works were examined. He adds, however, that Plotinus did not follow any of these authorities closely but had a personal and original approach in his speculations and brought the insight (νοῦν) of Ammonius to each problem. The first thing we notice is that the list of authors read does not include Plato and Aristotle; indeed the writers mentioned are all of the Christian era. In the *Enneads* themselves, however, none of these authorities are mentioned by name. Indeed the latest philosophical writer referred to by name is Epicurus (2.9.15.8), who flourished about 300 B.C.[6] We can only assume from this that knowledge of the basic Platonic and Aristotelian texts was assumed for students at this stage.

What does Porphyry mean by his remark that Plotinus brought the intuition of Ammonius to bear on each particular problem? Some help in understanding this is probably to be found in an extraordinarily difficult text (daggered by Harder as untranslateable) which speaks of Plotinus as ἐκπαθῶς φράζων καὶ τὸ συμπαθείας ἢ παραδόσεως. This probably means that out of a natural flair for his subject-matter Plotinus was able to expound philosophy from two sources: the traditional writings of the great thinkers of the past, and his own sense of kinship with the spirit of reality. Hence we can see how it is that Porphyry can go on to say that in Plotinus' writings we can find hidden Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines, including, indeed, the essence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Plotinus' natural philosophic bent would be employed in handling these works not in the spirit of a commentator, but in that of an original thinker. This application of natural talent to the school texts would presumably be included in what Porphyry calls Ammonius' method. How it works in

practice when Plotinus comes to deal with Aristotle and the Stoics we shall see in a moment. At this stage, however, we may observe that one of Plotinus' main bones of contention with the critic Longinus seems to have been on this issue. Armstrong states the position very well as follows:[7] 'Porphyry tells us (*Life*, ch. 14) that "when the treatise *On Principles* and the *Philarchaios* of Longinus were read to Plotinus, he said 'Longinus is a scholar, but certainly not a philosopher'".[8] From this remark I would hazardously conjecture that Longinus professed himself to be offering the authentic interpretation of Plato based on a close and accurate study of the text of the *Dialogues*, of a kind which Plotinus considered inappropriate to a philosopher—certainly nobody who knew the *Enneads* would insult Plotinus himself by calling his interpretation of Plato "scholarly".' As Armstrong shows, citing chapter eighteen of Porphyry's *Life*, Longinus disputed Plotinus' interpretation of the relationship between the Divine Mind and the Forms on the grounds—as Armstrong surely rightly suggests—that it was not a literal, and possibly that it was not a traditional, interpretation of Plato. We should recall that on a related topic to this, namely the interpretation of *Timaeus* 39E, Plotinus breaks with the Numenian interpretation and substitutes a new one of his own within the *Enneads* themselves.[9] Furthermore although there are very few passages in the *Enneads* where Plotinus tells us that he is going against the received school-tradition, there is one of some significance. At the opening of 4.8.1 he remarks that his opinion that the whole soul does not descend is unorthodox (παρὰ δόξαν τῶν ἄλλων), and this verdict is endorsed by Proclus, who rejects the novel theory (νεώτερος λόγος).[10] It is significant that precisely here, where Plotinus openly breaks with the tradition, very few of the later Neoplatonists followed him.[11] Proclus is more representative of the general outlook, and, surprisingly at first sight but truly, he is the man whose thought can still be recognized by a modern scholar as 'in some ways closer to the real thought of Plato'.[12]

There is a further point to be noticed. Plotinus did not write commentaries on Platonic texts, nor anything approaching an introduction to Plato such as we have surviving from the hand of Albinus. This fact is not so significant for Plotinus, a third-century figure, as it would have been had he lived two hundred years later. Nevertheless it should be added to the earlier evidence we have adduced to show that in Plotinus' view, although we must *try* to explain, as he says in 6.4.16 of the descent of the soul, that our doctrines accord or at least do not conflict with those of the ancients, yet scholars and philosophers are not identical.

Such then is what we may perhaps rashly call the method of Ammonius. The philosopher is to handle his predecessors in a philosophical rather than a scholarly manner. We should now attempt to see how such a method works in practice, and then, after examining all the evidence, determine the general question of the attitude of Plotinus to his sources and the extent of his dependence on them. We may begin therefore with what seems to be the easiest part of the problem to handle, namely Stoicism.

There are many aspects of Stoicism which Plotinus openly opposes. Perhaps the most ardent advocate of a stoicizing Plotinus, Professor Theiler,[13] lists a number of them: the materialist view of the soul (4.7.2) and of God (2.4.1); their theory of categories (6.1.25ff.); their concept of Time (3.7.7.25; 3.7.13.59); their doctrine of the interpenetration of bodies (2.7). As Henry has remarked,[14] Plotinus is not at all averse from using arguments drawn from the Peripatetic armoury to deal with these objectionable sides of Stoicism where necessary. It is curious that no Stoic philosopher is mentioned by name in the *Enneads*, and Henry thinks that Plotinus' arguments against them may often be drawn from Aristotelian textbooks, such as those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who, as we have seen, was read in Plotinus' school. It should be added, of course, that since the time of Antiochus of Ascalon (first century B.C.) at least, Stoic doctrines had been

blended with those of other schools. The Stoicism that Plotinus feels obliged to attack is perhaps more a state of mind than the theories of any particular philosopher, even if that philosopher is a Posidonius.

Yet what of the Stoic-sounding ideas that we find in Plotinus: the sympathy of the universe and its interconnection; the *Logos* and *spermatikoi logoi* in the material world; the theories we discussed while dealing with Plotinus' theodicy and doctrines of Providence? All these things are certainly to be found in Plotinus, but they are radically altered from their original form. We have seen much of this transformation in the earlier chapters of this book. We observed how the Plotinian *logos* is no pantheistic God, as the Stoics made it, but the power of transcendent principles working in the visible world. *Spermatikoi logoi* in Plotinus depend on the Platonic Ideal World, thus having little but the name in common with their Stoic counterparts, and as for Providence, it is sufficient to state that while for the Stoics it depends on pantheism, for Plotinus it rests on the foundation of emanation from the transcendent One. Plotinus has indeed taken over the Stoic doctrine of 'sympathy', but with the pantheism removed, and we should remember that he was thus able to see it as an elaboration of the Platonic doctrine of the World Soul. In short, there are Stoic doctrines embedded in the *Enneads*, as Porphyry says, but Plotinus is always their master. They are used when they are useful, but when they oppose his own insights they are relentlessly discarded or rewritten. As a minor, but illuminating, example of this procedure of rewriting, we may briefly consider Plotinus and the Stoics on the question of suicide.

The Stoics held that since the only good thing is virtue and the only bad thing is vice, while all else remains morally indifferent, the philosopher who finds life unbearable can commit suicide after a reasoned consideration of the particular circumstances. It seems from Diogenes Laertius' *Lives* that both Zeno and Cleanthes committed suicide.[15] The grounds

for their actions, however, were trivial, and indeed, on their own account, 'indifferent'. Such action was allowed to the Stoic on behalf of his country, to avoid being forced to commit a crime, and to avoid poverty or chronic illness. And the opponents of the Stoics did not hesitate to point out the 'indifferent' nature of some of these grounds. The Stoic defence would seem to have been that life itself is a matter of indifference and so long as the decision to suicide is taken calmly and rationally (εὔλογος ἐξαγωγή) and does not involve the subjection of the reason to the passions, it is to be allowed to the wise man.

Plotinus' approach to the position is most illuminating. Porphyry tells us in chapter eleven of the *Life* that he himself once contemplated suicide but was dissuaded by Plotinus. Plotinus suggested that his decision had been taken not in accordance with pure reason, but in a fit of depression. Hence it must be unreasonable. Now we might suppose that this argumentation is strictly Stoic—and indeed a Stoic should, on his own premisses, have accepted it—but Plotinus demonstrates in the *Enneads* themselves that although the soul has always the right to determine whether to remain in the body or to leave it, it should always in fact choose to stay. Flight to the beyond, we read in 1.8.6, does not mean leaving this life, but rather living in accordance with the precepts of holiness and justice.

Inge is wrong to imply that a passage of 1.4.16 means that Plotinus thought that suicide was ever in practice justifiable.[16] Plotinus simply says in this passage that the soul is not prevented from abandoning the body[17] and always has the authority to decide whether to abandon it or not. But this is the kind of decision readers of Plotinus should understand very well. The soul can choose for or against suicide, but the good soul will always in practice choose against. It merely remains to see why it will choose against.

The answer to this is given in *Ennead* 1.9 and in a fragment of Plotinus' teachings not recorded in the *Enneads* but preserved

by the Aristotelian commentator Elias.[18] Since the time of the *Phaedo*, it had been accepted among the Platonists that suicide was to be rejected, and in that respect Plotinus' own rejection in these pages is not surprising. What is interesting in our present context is rather how he demonstrates the truth of the Platonic position against the Stoics on Stoic ground, namely by showing that suicide is unreasonable. His arguments are that just as the sun performs a providential function in the world in general, so the soul must be regarded as the providential lord of the body and the body must therefore not be wholly neglected while the soul is still able to look after it. Furthermore, it would be a curious thing if man, who after all is not responsible for the joining together of soul and body, should take it upon himself to separate them instead of waiting for the force that has bound them together to come and loose them. This is of course a version of Socrates' own argument in the *Phaedo* (62 c).

These are the arguments of the passage from Elias. In the *Ennead* itself Plotinus musters others. His principal theme here is that if the soul detaches itself from the body by suicide, this cannot take place without the soul itself's becoming a prey to the passions of, for example, grief or anger. Thus, against the Stoics, at no time could a fully reasoned decision for suicide be taken. And this is reinforced in a typically Plotinian and paradoxical fashion. If the time of one's death is allotted by fate, it could not be a happy act to attempt suicide before this, unless, says Plotinus, it is necessary to do so. Of course the whole point of the tract thus far has been to demonstrate that it never is necessary, and therefore that it would never be happy, for as Plotinus now says, if one's rank in the next world is to be determined by the state in which one leaves this, suicide is out of the question so long as there is any chance of progress towards the good life. It seems unlikely that Plotinus thought that anyone was good beyond all possibility of improvement, and hence withdrawal is to be rejected. As Plotinus puts it elsewhere (4.4.44.23), 'It seems reasonable

(εὔλογον) not to withdraw from life because of the difficulties of acclimatizing oneself to living'.

Here then we have an excellent example of the independent approach of Plotinus to Stoicism. He has learned from Socrates that suicide is an abandonment of one's post; he recognizes from the Stoics, however, that it is right that the soul should have the right to decide in favour of life or death. From these two positions he formulates his own original stand. Certainly the soul should decide, but the soul of the good will always decide for life. And as with this doctrine, so with much else of Stoicism. Where the Stoics have an inkling of the truth, they are followed, with or without reinterpretation; where they err they are unhesitatingly corrected or rejected.

We may now briefly look at the so-called Middle Platonists and Neopythagoreans. As we have seen, the writings of many of these men were read in Plotinus' seminars, but none of them is mentioned by name in the *Enneads* and no modern scholars would pretend that Plotinus regarded them as more than starting-points for discussion. They had none of the authority of the 'ancient' thinkers. Sometimes what they say is useful;[19] sometimes it is to be corrected, as we have observed in the case of Numenius' interpretations of the *Timaeus*; sometimes it is to be rejected flatly, as are the extreme forms of dualism taught by Numenius and Plutarch. All these pre-Plotinian writers themselves are professors of Ancient Philosophy, the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle or 'Pythagoras'. Their aim is an exposition of the true attitudes of the master or masters. It is not surprising therefore that, however much Plotinus learned from them, our opinion of his claims to originality will not be affected by our understanding of this indebtedness, but by our grasp of his attitude towards the masters themselves to whom all these later prophets claimed to show the way.

As for the pre-Socratics, to whom Plotinus sometimes refers, they need be reviewed only very briefly here. The way their opinions are introduced in turn (Heraclitus, Empedocles, Pythagoras and his school in 4.8.1; Anaxagoras, Heraclitus,

Empedocles in 5.1.9) seems to suggest that Plotinus is going to a handbook rather than bothering with the original texts. He quotes the odd tag or generality to which he tends to attribute whatever meaning he sees fit. But he regards even the best of them, Parmenides, as vague on serious matters when compared with the Parmenides of Plato's dialogue (5.1.9). The pre-Socratics then are at best props, and sometimes mere names traditionally listed (after the fashion of Aristotle) when a new doctrine comes up for discussion.

We can now turn to Plotinus' second major source: Aristotle. The writings of Aristotle are, as Porphyry says, deeply embedded in the *Enneads*. We can find him in matters of small importance and in some of Plotinus' major philosophical theories. Henry has demonstrated beautifully[20] how Plotinus is able to go back from the near-contemporary Peripatetic Alexander, whose works, as Porphyry notices,[21] were read in Plotinus' school, to Aristotle himself. In this case, it is a matter of something quite small; elsewhere, however, we find Plotinus using theories of potentiality and actuality, or of the relation between the knowing mind and the object of its thought. But let us look a little further. In Aristotle there is no question but that activity (ἐνέργεια) is superior to potentiality (δύναμις).[22] In Plotinus, the word δύναμις is given a comparable but markedly different significance when applied to the One, as we saw in an earlier chapter.[23] That strange version of parts of the *Enneads* which has come down to us in Arabic under the name *The Theology of Aristotle* contains at the beginning of book eight the following sentence:[24] 'We say that actuality is superior to potentiality in this world, whereas in the upper world potentiality is superior to actuality.' The origin of this doctrine is obscure; perhaps there is some influence of the strange primacy of genus to species which is sometimes to be found in Aristotle.[25] The actual phrase of the *Theology* is not paralleled by a precise Plotinian text, but that need not mean it does not represent a Plotinian position. The One, at any rate, has the power to create all things, and

in that sense is potentially all things, a sense, of course, which involves neither the pantheism of the Stoa nor the Aristotelian primacy of the finite actual (τὸ ἓν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲ ἕν· ἀρχὴ γὰρ πάντων οὐ πάντα, ἀλλ' ἐκείνως πάντα, 5.2.1.1). Plotinus is quite capable of using the Aristotelian concept of potentiality and actuality in an Aristotelian way. But he is always quite capable of moving the sense of δύναμις from 'potentiality' to 'power', thus giving what Hadot has called 'une intuition fondamentalement anti-aristotélicienne'.[26]

Then again there is the question of Aristotle's God. In breaking with that Plotinus was opposing not only Aristotle but the Middle Platonists as well, for the view that God must be understood as an Aristotelian self-thinking mind had become a commonplace by the second century A.D.[27] Indeed it seems from a very strange passage of *Ennead* 6.9 that, if one said that there is a God, the sophisticated world would almost inevitably think of this Aristotelian self-thinking mind.[28] But although Plotinus makes ample use of the Aristotelian doctrine of the thinking mind being identical with its objects at the level of the second hypostasis,[29] he attacks Aristotle vigorously for suggesting that such a God, involving such a logical duality, could be the first principle of a monistic universe.[30] In other words, Aristotle's theory can be used where Plotinus sees fit to use it—which may not always be where Aristotle supposed it should be used. It is rather amusing to see the very attitudes Aristotle himself adopted towards his predecessors, particularly the pre-Socratic 'natural' philosophers, being adopted by Plotinus towards Aristotle himself.

We need spend no further time on the Aristotelian doctrines Plotinus rejects outright, such as the categories (6.1.1–24), the soul-form as an act of the body (4.7.8[5]), or the fifth element (2.1.2). More significant is the fact that he is not particularly interested in Aristotle's version of Platonism—and this will serve as a bridge by which we can now at last pass on to consider Plotinus' attitude to Plato himself, for here is the ultimate scale by which his originality must be measured.

Now prime among the doctrines of the Plato of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is the theory of the derivation of the Forms from the One and the Dyad. Plotinus is well aware that the Forms were traditionally so derived,[31] but he only alludes to the doctrine specifically on three occasions: at 5.1.5.14, 5.1.6.1 (this is very vague; Plotinus speaks of the difficulty of seeing how plurality or a dyad or number arises) and 5.4.2.7. A glance at the last-named passage will put the matter in perspective. 'From the Indefinite Dyad and the One', says Plotinus, 'arise the Forms and the Numbers, that is, the Intellect.' Now although attempts to understand how Plato supposed the Numbers and Forms to arise from the One and the Dyad have not been very successful,[32] it is at least clear that what arises is not the Intellect, as Plotinus says it is. We can interpret Plotinus' unwillingness to enquire further into what Aristotle means in several ways, but it seems certain that one reason is that he has his own opinion about the relation of the One and the Dyad—and that opinion is not to be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Whether Plotinus simply supposed that Aristotle had misinterpreted the doctrine is a problem beyond our powers to solve, but we know that when he read the account of Plato's philosophy in the *Metaphysics* he did not find there the equation of the Dyad with Aristotle's *own* concept of Intelligible Matter;[33] nor did he find his own dynamic notion that the Dyad, after its birth from the One, has some kind of proclivity to return (ἔφεσις, 5.3.11.12). Thus once again we find Plotinus taking over a doctrine in a rather nominal way, while leaving himself free to refashion it as he sees fit.

But the Plato of Aristotle is not the same as the Plato of the dialogues. We must now face the heart of the problem and see whether the attitude of Plotinus towards his 'sources' which is emerging needs to be modified here. We must first of all see what Plotinus himself has to say formally about his debts to Plato. A passage from 5.1.8 would appear to be the best starting-point. Plotinus defends his account of the three levels

of reality by claiming that Plato knew of them. His own views, he says, are not novel or contemporary; they are in the form of an explanation of earlier theories;[34] their antiquity can be proved by reference tò the writings of Plato himself. Furthermore, and this is perhaps the most significant phrase of the passage, they were uttered long ago, but not explicitly (πάλαι μὲν εἰρῆσθαι μὴ ἀναπεπταμένως).[35] This should be retained firmly in the memory, for Plotinus is certainly not the man to be accused of not making things explicit. His tendency rather is to state his own principles *ad nauseam* till, as he hopes, they are inculcated in the reader by some kind of osmosis.

What then does this passage tell us? It tells us that it is important to realize that the fundamental principles of philosophy can be found—though not necessarily clearly—in the writings of Plato. It is the task of the philosopher to clarify these principles. But this will not always be easy, for as we read elsewhere in the *Enneads* (4.4.22.12; 4.8.1.27), Plato does not always speak so consistently that we can easily determine what he wishes to say. Nevertheless, if like the Gnostics we break entirely new ground, we shall find ourselves 'outside the truth' (2.9.6.12). From these formal utterances, therefore, we should suppose that the author of the *Enneads* would have been delighted with the remark of Augustine that one would have supposed that in Plotinus Plato lived again.[36]

Yet how does this theory apply to Plotinus' treatment of Platonic texts? Theiler has applied the singularly appropriate phrase *Plato dimidiatus* to the Plato we find in the *Enneads*,[37] and it is well known that despite the continual appeal to the views of the master, and the use of φησί as almost an equivalent of the Pythagorean αὐτὸς ἔφα (the Master said), there is very little reference in the *Enneads* to the early dialogues, little in general of Platonic origin on ethics or politics, little from the *Laws*. Even a dialogue like the *Theaetetus*, which occurs frequently in Henry and Schwyzer's *testimonia*, is represented almost exclusively by the passage about likeness to God in 176AB. It is the highly confident

metaphysical dialogues of Plato's middle period, *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, which together with the *Timaeus* and a strangely interpreted *Parmenides* are the most frequently quoted in the *Enneads*. To these we should add the *Second Letter*, which Plotinus believed to be by Plato. There are also snippets from other works, particularly the *Sophist* and *Philebus*, but the above are the most significant. And we should remember that even within these 'central books' of Platonism, Plotinus again and again refers to the same passages: *Republic* 509, *Symposium* 210ff., *Phaedrus* 247, *Sophist* 248–9, *Timaeus* 39E and so on. It would be rash to suggest that he used an anthology; it is more likely that he did not go through the whole Platonic *corpus* thoroughly. Nevertheless there is no doubt that his attitude to the Platonic text was what we might call 'anthological'. He finds the positions of Platonism so well summed up in a few passages that he resorts to these again and again. We should remember that he had no idea whatsoever of any developmental theory to account for the differences of Plato's thoughts, nor does he appreciate the reason why Plato chose to write in dialogue form. He makes therefore little allowance for *ad hominem* argumentation. Contradictions in Plato are either problems to be resolved, as we have seen, or, as I have tried to show elsewhere in the case of his theories of *Eros*,[38] they are repeated in modified form in the *Enneads* themselves.

Nevertheless, as has been observed already, Plotinus did not regard himself as a scholar, but as a philosopher who brought his own approach to bear on problems; and he did not write commentaries. It is curious too how in other ways he stands aloof from what is usually called Neoplatonism. It may be noticed what a comparatively minor figure he is in Merlan's *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, where the current of ideas seems to run from Speusippus and the Old Academy through Posidonius to Iamblichus. Somehow Plotinus stands aside, markedly distinct from the orthodox 'Platonic' tradition.

As Henry has pointed out,[39] there are three main planks of

Plotinus' philosophy which have without doubt come from what he thought Plato to have said clearly: the distinction between sensibles and intelligibles; the immateriality and immortality of the soul; the transcendence of the One or Good. These are certainly in Plotinus' view the foundations of true philosophy, and to deviate from them would be absurd. Nevertheless once within this framework we should notice how Plotinus proceeds. First of all he adds doctrines which Plato never held and which Plotinus never twists his 'source' into supporting. An example of such a doctrine is the view that in the case of living things there are not only generic and specific Forms but Forms of individuals.[40] Then there are cases where Plotinus, for some reason which we cannot be sure we understand, actually changes what Plato says. A striking example of this has been pointed out by Armstrong,[41] who observes that whereas in the *Phaedrus* (252D7) Plato describes the process of doing good to one's beloved as 'working on a statue' (ἄγαλμα τεκταίνεται), Plotinus in 1.6.9.13 exhorts the searcher for the Good to go on working at *his own* statue (τεκταίνων τὸ σὸν ἄγαλμα). Then there are the more obvious changes of doctrine, for example in the attitude to symmetry. For Plato, symmetry, as we read repeatedly, and especially in the *Republic* and *Phaedo*, is of the very essence of Goodness and Beauty; for Plotinus, on the other hand, the essence of Beauty is Life. Why is there more beauty on a living than a dead face? Why are portraits which are more alive considered more beautiful than those which are more symmetrical? Because it is wrong to suppose that symmetry is the bringer of beauty. The truth is that beauty is the cause of symmetry (6.7.22.25).[42] Then too there is Plotinus' attitude to the arts. It is true that at one place in the *Republic* (484CD) Plato tells us that the painter is able to look up to the Ideal World as a pattern of reality, but the normal view of that dialogue, elaborated in great detail in book ten, is that all artists are simply copying particulars, that is, producing copies of mere copies of the real. Before

Plotinus there had been a revulsion against this attitude,[43] and Plotinus himself will not accept it. Using the traditional example of Phidias—a fact which makes us suppose that here he is not thinking of the isolated passage at *Republic* 484, but rather preferring his own version of the later tradition to the revered Plato himself—Plotinus insists that the sculptor did not make his statue of Zeus from looking at sensible models, but rather that he went back to the Form behind the material objects and imagined what Zeus would be like if he were to make himself visible (5.8.1.34–40).[44]

Ennead 5.5.12 provides interest of a rather different kind. In Plato's *Statesman* we read that the good man of state is like a weaver who combines the different classes of the community. His task, however, is made especially difficult by the fact that there is some kind of opposition between various of the virtues: courage, for example, and moderation (306A–308B). But this insight that although both courage and moderation are 'parts of virtue' they can be in opposition to one another is nowhere paralleled in Plato by the recognition that there might be any divergence in the claims on man of Goodness and Beauty. Indeed the search for Beauty in the *Symposium* and the journey to the Good in the *Republic* are always rightly supposed to be different ways of looking at the same philosophic procedure. And in Plotinus too this is often the case, for example in *Ennead* 1.6, which perhaps best fulfils Porphyry's description of Plotinus as living in accordance with the methods prescribed by the *Symposium*.[45] Yet in 5.5.12 Plotinus is able to see that at times the love of Beauty and the love of the Good may not be compatible. The Good is superior to Beauty and its effects are different; it is gentle and friendly, where Beauty brings violence and astonishment. Love of Beauty may even prevent the aspirant to philosophy from attaining the Good. There is no need to go further here in the exegesis of this difficult chapter. Suffice it to say that Plotinus' respect for Plato does not prevent him from saying some very un-Platonic things if he feels they are necessary.

It is no service to our case to go into matters where Plotinus produces an un-Platonic doctrine by unwittingly *misinterpreting* Plato himself. Mistakes of exegesis are unimportant to a philosopher. The fact that Plotinus should not have found his doctrine that the Forms are 'not outside the Intellect' in the dialogues does not affect the question of his attitude to the Platonic text. For that purpose all that matters is that he thought he could find it in that text. It is more to the point simply to list a few examples of doctrines which are either clearly in opposition to the Platonic text or not discussed by Plato but opposed to what we can surmise of his opinions, or again produced by Plotinus by what looks like a wilful manipulation of that text for philosophical purposes.

It is time therefore to consider the three questions with which we began: Does Plotinus regard himself solely as an interpreter of Plato? Does Plato, in Plotinus' view, possess the whole truth? Where Plotinus differs from Plato, is he ever aware of the difference and how does he account for it? The answer to the first two questions must, on the results of this enquiry, be No. Plotinus does not think that Plato possesses the whole truth, nor does he think of himself as merely an exegete, despite what he says in 3.7.1 or 5.1.8. As he himself puts it in 3.7.7, 'But as things are, our best beginning is to range over the most noteworthy of the ancient opinions and see whether any of them accord with ours'.

And yet there is no doubt that his attitude to Plato is quite different from that to other philosophers. Plato has set him on the path which will lead to truth: that is the sense in which he is a Platonist. Plato has already recognized a number of fundamental principles of metaphysical reality. These must be filled out in detail, but the original schema does not need to be varied, simply because it accords with Plotinus' own. It must be the opinion of anyone who studies the *Enneads* that Plotinus' major motive for philosophizing is to rationalize his own intuitions and experiences. Plotinus is a Platonist because Plato enables him to achieve this with the most success.

Fundamentally, therefore, Plotinus' attitude towards Plato is the same as that towards all other philosophic predecessors, namely that one should accept what is acceptable. Plotinus—perhaps this is the method of Ammonius—finds that Plato, so far as he goes, is highly acceptable.

The third question, namely how far Plotinus is aware of differing from Plato and how he accounts for this difference, is the most difficult to answer. We must not, as we have seen, take into account doctrines which Plotinus thought were in Plato, but which we cannot find there. We must limit ourselves to ideas which Plotinus knows are not clear in Plato or which he seems to recognize are not in Plato at all. Here a subjective element must come into our judgement. Plotinus recognizes inconsistencies in Plato, as we have seen, in 4.8.1. Why he thinks they are there we can only surmise. He does not attribute them to any development of Plato's thought and it seems likely that he thought that a 'higher synthesis' was possible, even if not explicitly made in the dialogues and even if he could not make it himself. We might hazard a guess that he looked on Plato almost as Plato himself looked on the poets, as inspired teachers whose words were not always clear even to themselves.

But the conflict of Goodness and Beauty in *Ennead* 5.5.12, or the matter of 'working on one's own statue' in Plotinus' version of the *Phaedrus*, are the real tests. In the case of the latter we might say that Plotinus was working from memory, that he forgot exactly what Plato had said, that 'it was something about working on statues'. But how curious that a man who is said to have found the whole truth in Plato and who is quite capable of quoting accurately should not bother to look up the text if he thought that accuracy was of tremendous importance. As for Goodness and Beauty, one can only say that if he did not realize that his treatment is un-Platonic, he was a fool—and he certainly was not a fool. The case of *mimesis* is similar. It is asking too much to require us to suppose that the long discussion of this subject in *Republic* x

slipped his memory. One can only conclude that he knew it perfectly well, and chose to improve upon it.

There is no polemic against Plato in the *Enneads*. The honour due to the Master who had seen so much would render that impossible. But tacit correction is possible and necessary at times. As with the others, so with Plato, Plotinus takes what he wants and leaves the rest. As Plato says of Homer,[46] and Aristotle of Plato,[47] so occasionally Plotinus too says implicitly (μὴ ἀναπεπταμένως) of Plato: 'I honour him but I honour truth more.' If this is what a Neoplatonist is, it seems reasonable to suppose that Plato would have regarded him as the best kind of Platonist.

14

A COMMON METAPHOR

The aim of the previous chapter was to examine the *Enneads* in the context of Plotinus' 'sources'; our present aim is to show by the consideration of a particular small example how Plotinus handles certain terms of philosophical and quasi-philosophical significance which were current in his day. At *Ennead* 1.6.7.5–7 he speaks of 'stripping off the garments (ἱματίων) with which we are clothed when we descend from νοῦς and reascending in our naked selves' (ἀποδυομένοις ἃ καταβαίνοντες ἠμφιέσμεθα...ἱματίων ἀποθέσεις τῶν πρὶν καὶ τὸ γυμνοῖς ἀνιέναι). Similar language occurs several times in Proclus. In the *Commentary on the Alcibiades*[1] we read that when we ascend[2] and strip off the passions and tunics (χιτῶνας) which we added to ourselves in our descent, the last cloak is that of ambition, our intention being to become naked (γυμνῆτες)—as the oracle puts it—and settle ourselves down with God. Of this passage we can note the following:

(*a*) There are many similar ideas and comparable phrases to those in the passage of Plotinus.

(*b*) The cloak of ambition (not mentioned by Plotinus) is described a few lines above (2–3) as being a phrase of Plato's. According to Dioscurides, quoted by Athenaeus,[3] Plato said that the last thing we strip off (ἀποδυόμεθα) at death is the tunic (χιτῶνα) of fame. This statement does not appear in Plato's extant writings, but Gulick, the editor of the Loeb Athenaeus, believes that the word δόξα, which Dioscurides took to mean 'fame', in fact may have the simple meaning 'opinion' and that the remark may be a vague reminiscence of *Theaetetus* 161 E. Dioscurides then would be simply distorting Plato's meaning. For the notion that souls must strip off the accretions of noble body, lineage and wealth, however, we may compare *Gorgias* 523 C–E, where these things are

called ἀμφιέσματα and where it is said that when they are gone the naked soul can be judged by its naked judge, soul beholding soul.[4] And although Philo thinks of δόξα (opinion) as one of the χιτῶνες which envelop τὸ λογικόν,[5] we should observe the importance which Plato attributes to fame at *Symposium* 209D before finally deciding whether Dioscurides is both misreporting Plato and almost perversely giving the worst possible sense to his words.

This much at least is clear, that even if Plato did not in fact speak of a tunic of ambition, at least he had taken over the 'Orphic'-Empedoclean ideas of seeing the accretions of the soul as garments to be stripped off. Thus Proclus could be satisfied with working within a genuinely Platonic tradition.

(*c*) Proclus remarks that our intention is to be with God 'naked', as the oracle says. This oracle is alluded to again in the *Commentary on the Alcibiades*[6] and quoted in the *Commentary on the Cratylus*.[7] It ran as follows:

> οὐ γὰρ ἐφικτὰ τὰ θεῖα βροτοῖς τοῖς σῶμα νοοῦσιν,
> ἀλλ' ὅσσοι γυμνῆτες ἄνω σπεύδουσι πρὸς ὕψος.

This oracle can easily be fitted in with the passage of the *Gorgias* mentioned above and must have afforded Proclus considerable 'evidence' in favour of his view that the teachings of Plato and those of the Chaldaean Oracles are basically identical. Of course, as Lewy has shown,[8] the Oracles are in a sense Platonic.

We must now turn to a further passage of Proclus, this time from the *De Malorum Subsistentia*,[9] where we read as follows: 'Exuendum igitur nobis et tunicas quas descendentes induti sumus, et nudi hinc progrediendum illic...et intellectum praesidem faciendum interioris vite pro sensu.' This is the Latin of William of Moerbeke, but fortunately Psellus preserves the original text of Proclus:[10] ἀποδυτέον οὖν ἡμῖν τοὺς χιτῶνας, οὓς κατιόντες ἀμφιεννύμεθα, καὶ γυμνοῖς ἐντεῦθεν πορευτέον ἐκεῖσε, καὶ νοῦν ἡγεμόνα ποιητέον τῆς ἔνδον ζωῆς ἀντὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως.

If we compare all the Proclan evidence with the original Plotinian text of 1.6.7, we can have no doubts but that the interpretations are in a common tradition. Are there any easily determinable differences? One is immediately striking, for while both in his *Commentary on the Alcibiades* and in the *De Malorum Subsistentia* Proclus speaks of 'tunics', Plotinus refers to the laying aside of ἱμάτια. In this Plotinus is speaking the language of Plato himself, rejecting, if he knew of it, the talk about tunics attributed to Plato by Dioscurides. What we should like to know is whether Plotinus was aware of the rôle of the tunic (χιτών) in various sub-mystical systems of his day. In the *Commentary on the Alcibiades* the χιτῶνες seem to stand for the emotions, and in the section of the *De Malorum Subsistentia* recorded by Psellus it seems that, when the χιτών is abandoned, mind, and not the senses, is in command of the soul.

Now when the later Platonists describe the descent of the soul, they frequently suppose that it acquires 'tunics' of impurity because of passing either through the seven planetary spheres or through the four elements.[11] These tunics form the vehicle which supports the soul within the bodily frame. That Plotinus believed in such a vehicle seems certain.[12] That he believed it was acquired in the descent through the heavens is also certain (4.3.15.1–2). He never, however, uses the term χιτών in this connection.

There are a number of possible explanations for this. One might say that he was unaware of the whole theory of 'tunics'. Against this we may remark that Porphyry knew of it,[13] as apparently did Philo and Valentinus,[14] not to speak of Dioscurides. Assuming then that he did know of it, does it make any difference to what he says whether he leaves it out or puts it in? To a man of the third century the answer to this question could only be Yes. The χιτῶνες seem to be specifically linked with the planetary spheres or the elements, and those who linked them frequently assumed that the planetary spheres or elements are bad, the work of an evil Demiurge, as the Gnostics would put it. Thus if Plotinus subscribed to the theory

of χιτῶνες he would appear to be making dangerous concessions to the language—if not to the ideas—of dualism. Plotinus' view however is that everything, even matter, derives ultimately from the One and that it is blasphemous to suppose that the heavens are not God's handiwork (2.9.16).

When Proclus speaks then of stripping off garments and of the advance of the naked soul, we can be assured that he is thinking not only of the purification of the soul, that is, speaking metaphorically, but also of the concrete process of ridding the ὄχημα of its physical accretions. In fact Proclus' language seems to be largely literal. What about Plotinus? By remaining silent about the controversial word χιτών he leaves us in some doubt on the matter. He does, however, bring in another simile which Proclus neglects, the simile of the approach to the rites of a mystery religion, perhaps that of Isis.[15] Plotinus' sense is clear. Just as to perform the ritual one takes off one's clothes to enter in a spirit of purity, so in the mystic ascent one takes off the clothes of everyday life. In Proclus however we are not dealing with a simple analogy of this sort; he holds that one actually strips off physical accretions. Had Proclus used the parallel of the mysteries, he would have been merely explaining one physical act, the stripping off of a χιτών, by another, the ritual stripping before entering the sanctuary. Both are concerned with something bodily. Plotinus, on the other hand, uses a physical act as an *analogy* for a psychical purification. In Proclus we are dealing with the purging away of the ὄχημα; in Plotinus with the purification of the soul. Thus all the time, where Proclus speaks literally, Plotinus speaks metaphorically and analogically.

And this surely is where theurgy comes in and why Plotinus has little interest in it. For Plotinus the emphasis is on the purification of the soul itself, which sheds its ὄχημα when it ascends to the intelligible world. When the soul is thus purified, the ὄχημα will naturally fall away. Proclus' view seems rather to be that we may work on the quasi-material ὄχημα itself, and since this is quasi-material, material means will

answer. Dodds writes that 'the substitution of theurgy for the personal mysticism of Plotinus enhanced the importance of the astral body; for theurgy operated in the borderland between mind and matter, claiming to produce spiritual effects by material means, and it could be explained that such effects were mediated by the psychic envelope'.[16] Yet this in a way misses the point, for theurgy does not seem for the later Neoplatonists to be aimed at purifying the soul but at the purging of the quasi-material envelope itself. One can see the reasoning here, even if it is perverted. No doubt Proclus and the others felt that θεωρία must, being itself immaterial, affect what is immaterial, what is solely immaterial. Thus they felt they needed something which would affect the quasi-material. As far as I know, there is no evidence that Proclus ever supposed that the mystical union itself could be attained by theurgy proper. His fault was that he altogether lost sight of the attainment of this union. It is true that theurgy seems at times to be higher than philosophy,[17] but Proclus' strict view is that theurgy does not bring us to the mystical union.[18] For that we need a 'higher kind of theurgy'—by which Proclus means 'a different kind'—namely faith.

Why does Proclus invoke πίστις at this point in his ascent?[19] Various reasons have been suggested, among them the influence of Christianity. Rosán holds that the belief that the ascent of the soul in Proclus is accomplished by faith is what chiefly distinguishes him from Plotinus. Yet faith, if this means more than a simple confidence in man's powers, as it certainly does for Proclus, is not a quality one would expect to hear of from a Platonist.[20] One reason Proclus has to fall back on it is that after devaluing the philosophical ascent in favour of theurgy, he finds that he has nothing to hand which will help him in his search for ultimate unity.

For Proclus much more than for Plotinus mysticism depends rather on the ability of man to raise himself in a somewhat mechanical fashion than on the unaccountable 'presence' of the One.[21] Now we see the other side of the coin.

Proclus has no real confidence in the Providence of the One at a lower level. Hence at the beginning of the ascent theurgy, man-manipulated, is a substitute. At a higher level there is left a vague 'faith'—and nothing is achieved. When Marinus, the biographer of Proclus, tells us that his hero, while practising theurgy, was granted visions of luminous phantoms sent by Hecate,[22] and we realize that this was his highest achievement, we think, for comparison, of the confident statement of Porphyry that Plotinus attained to union with the One on four occasions 'while I was with him'.[23]

We are here confronted with the fundamental difficulty in expounding Plotinus' philosophy—the difficulty produced by the personal involvement of Plotinus himself. If we compare Plotinus and Proclus, our immediate reaction is to say that Proclus is more scholarly, that he quotes his sources more, that he weighs one doctrine against another. But that is only a sign of a deeper difference: Plotinus rarely talks about philosophers; he is concerned with living a philosophy. When he uses analogies, he means them as analogies; he does not mistake them for literal truths. Later we shall consider some of these analogies in more detail. First, however, it is necessary for us to try to extract the significance of his actual philosophical and mystical expressions in order to understand how they affected his verbalization of the philosophical truths he believed himself to have seen.

Although the personal note is clear throughout the whole of the *Enneads*, Plotinus only rarely refers to his own experiences.[24] When Porphyry talks in the *Vita* of Plotinus' attaining communion with the One,[25] he says that he followed the paths (ὁδούς) laid down in Plato's *Symposium* and was rewarded by the appearance (ἐφάνη) of the first transcendent God on four occasions. This God, he adds, is situated above νοῦς and everything intelligible. We should note at once that the methods of Plotinus are strictly 'spiritual': he advances by thought and by the paths laid down in the *Symposium*. When therefore we turn back to the passage of 1.6.7 with which this chapter

began we need not be surprised to find, immediately after the reference to the ascent and the stripping off of garments, the text of the *Symposium* itself quoted. What could be more certain than that it is Plotinus' personal use of that dialogue—a use which Porphyry explicitly mentions—which is in question here? Proclan theurgical methods are excluded from the *Symposium*. We can assume that they are also excluded from this passage of the *Enneads*. The whole process is ineffable. And this is made clear beyond all possible doubt by the famous line 2 of the chapter: 'If anyone has seen it, he knows what I mean, how beautiful it is.'

A very similar phrase occurs in 6.9.9, a chapter full once again of reminiscences of the *Symposium*. 'There is the true object of love... Whoever has seen it knows what I mean, how the soul when it approaches takes another life.' There are elements in this section which speak in terms not only of seeing but of achieving unity with the Good, an idea which is not present in the *Symposium*. But when Plotinus appeals to his personal experience, he appeals to what he has 'seen', just as in 1.6.9, and this 'seeing' is, as Porphyry would have us believe, something which the paths indicated in the *Symposium* would enable the philosopher to achieve.

A third passage we should consider is from *Ennead* 6.9.4.15 ff. Here Plotinus is distinguishing instruction about union from union itself. Instruction will put one on the path (ὁδοῦ) and route (πορείας), but the vision itself is the achievement of the man who wishes to contemplate (Plotinus presumably means 'really wishes'): 'If someone has not come to the vision, if their soul has not known the splendour there or felt or possessed in itself that kind of loving experience which arises from the lover's seeing when he has come to rest where he loves....' Once again the contact is love—and the *Symposium* must be in Plotinus' mind; once again therefore the language is first of all of seeing, of having the vision. And there is one thing more to notice. The path and the journey lead us to the rest and the repose it brings. The language of the *Republic* is mingled here

with that of the *Symposium*: οἳ ἀφικομένῳ ὥσπερ ὁδοῦ ἀνάπαυλα ἂν εἴη καὶ τέλος τῆς πορείας (532 E 2–3).[26]

We can now return to the most famous, as well as the most difficult passage where Plotinus speaks to us in the first person, namely the opening lines of *Ennead* 4.8.1: 'Many times have I woken from my body to myself and become external to other things and inside myself. I see a marvellous beauty and then most of all am assured that I am part of a higher order, enacting an excellent life and becoming identical with the divine. I am stationed in it by coming to that activity and by settling myself beyond all the rest of the intelligible world.'[27]

If we need further confirmation that this translation is correct, we can bring forward a piece of circumstantial evidence. We have seen that Porphyry talks of the Plotinian ascent and of its connection with the *Symposium*. We have seen too how language from the *Symposium* appears in other sections of the *Enneads* where Plotinus feels bound to appeal to his personal experience. Our immediate task then will be to connect this passage itself with some of the language of mysticism which we have already briefly examined.

In 4.8.1 Plotinus writes that he awakes out of his body and becomes identical with the divine ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν ἑμαυτὸν ἱδρύσας. In chapter 23 of Porphyry's *Life*, in the course of the description of how Plotinus attained union with the 'first transcendent God' on four occasions, Porphyry remarks that this God has neither shape nor form and 'is situated beyond the Divine Mind and everything intelligible' (ὑπὲρ δὲ νοῦν καὶ πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἱδρυμένος). Especially in view of the versions of Ambrose and of the author of the *Theology of Aristotle*[28] it is not a difficult conjecture that the passage of Porphyry is an echo of our lines of *Ennead* 4.8.1, or at least of the thought of that section. This might provide additional confirmation—if such were needed—that Porphyry too believed that Plotinus was speaking there not only of the ascent to the level of the Divine Mind but of the mystical union itself.

A superficial objection to our comparison of 4.8.1.6–7 with chapter 23 of Porphyry's *Life* might be that there is no immediate reference to the *Symposium* at the beginning of 4.8.1. To this a number of things may be said. First of all, since this passage is an appeal to Plotinus' own experiences, the other passages of a similar kind can fairly be compared. These passages often use the language of the *Symposium*. Secondly we have in 4.8.1 not only Plotinus' remarks about his ascent, but, in much more detail, an account of how he tried to generalize the experience and rationalize it afterwards. One would expect this examination, in the usual Plotinian manner, to be by no means limited to the ideas to be found in a single Platonic dialogue, but to include suggestions from many sources. In fact, in this particular section, Plotinus considers Heraclitus, Empedocles and Pythagoras before moving on to the 'divine Plato' and attempting to resolve those difficulties which arise because the Master appears to contradict himself 'in order that people should not grasp his thought too easily'!

As soon as Plotinus starts analysing the Platonic passages, the language of the ascent of the soul inevitably comes up. At line 35 we find, for example, ἄνοδον, and below, τὴν πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν πορείαν. The Platonic sources are *Republic* 517B4–5 and 532E3. These passages have both been noted before in connection with another of Plotinus' personal utterances.[29] The second is particularly interesting. In 6.9.4.15 it was, as we saw, entangled with the *Symposium*. Now it is clearly to be seen in conjunction with the thought of Heraclitus. In 532E3 Plato speaks of the end of the journey and the ἀνάπαυλα from the road. At 4.8.1.14 Plotinus has quoted the words μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται from Heraclitus. How he understands this idea is clear from 4.8.5.6–7, where he speaks of ἡ Ἡρακλείτου ἀνάπαυλα ἐν τῇ φυγῇ in the same breath with Empedocles' 'flight from God'. The soul is seeking respite from toil; it may seek it the wrong way by a descent to the material world, as Heraclitus and Empedocles show, or it may

rise to the vision of the Good and the Beautiful, the ἀνάπαυλα and τέλος of the soul's journey according to the *Republic*.

Let us pull the scattered threads together and refer what we can see of Plotinus' own experience back to the passage in 1.6.7 with which we began. Our aim then was to suggest that in this passage Plotinus is talking in metaphors and that these metaphors are not susceptible of interpretation in literal terms. Hence when Plotinus speaks of the ascent (ἀναβατέον οὖν πάλιν),[30] we should not be surprised to find that he not only uses metaphors, the casting off of garments, for example, but finds that words fail him and that he must resort to an appeal to his personal experiences. What he does in this chapter is only what we should expect him to do on the basis of what we learn elsewhere in the *Enneads*.

There is one very curious feature of this matter which must now be considered. In all the passages we have looked at Plotinus refers to what he sees, to his vision of the Good. Now as Henry and others have pointed out,[31] Plotinus does not by any means limit himself to metaphors of seeing in his descriptions of the mystic union. Henry remarks that 'it is noteworthy that a Greek philosopher should prefer, in describing the mystical union, expressions which are more appropriate to the sense of touch than to the sense of vision'. He cites two very interesting examples of this trend: one is at 6.9.10.11–12, where we read ὄψεται, μᾶλλον δὲ συνέσται; the other is at 6.9.11.6, where the text runs μὴ ἑωραμένον, ἀλλ' ἡνωμένον. Now Henry finds it a little strange that a Greek philosopher should write in this way. Why does he think of it as strange? Surely because he is thinking, as is not at all surprising, of Plato, of the Sun in the *Republic* and of the general significance of light-metaphors both in orthodox Platonism and probably in the writings of Posidonius.[32]

There seems to be more than a matter of words involved here. If we attempt to draw a general picture of Plotinus' descriptions of and allusions to ecstasy, of the highest attainment of the philosophic life, we soon come to realize that it is

erroneous to suggest that there is an ultimate parallelism between what Plotinus is describing and the description of the vision of beauty in the *Symposium*.[33] We see that vision is not the ultimate achievement for Plotinus; his aim rather is union, which he tends to describe in the language of touch and contact. Yet Porphyry, we recall, says that Plotinus followed the patterns of contemplation laid down in the *Symposium*, and when Plotinus alludes to his *personal* experiences specifically, he uses the language of vision too. 'He who has seen it knows what I mean.'

Are there any conclusions from this? One at least is surely clear, that Plotinus himself, and not merely Porphyry, believed that he was achieving in the mystical union what Plato had described in the *Symposium*. This is assumed so naturally that when Plotinus bursts out with his own feelings, he immediately uses the specifically Platonic language, although when attempting a more precise account of what has happened to himself he alters the meaning of the terms of 'seeing' if he does not drop them altogether. 'Perhaps it was not a vision but another mode of seeing, a going forth from the self, a simplification, a surrender of the self, a stretch towards contact, a rest, a meditation directed towards adjustment; if a man sees what is in the innermost shrine. If he looks in other ways, nothing is there for him' (6.9.11).

A further conclusion can now be drawn. We know that Plotinus had little time for Gnosticism; we know of his immense respect for Plato. If now we find, even when he is using the language and supposing that he is achieving the aims of the *Symposium*, that this language has become unique and personal, so much the more shall we be convinced that the use of possibly Gnostic or Chaldaean language tells us very little *per se* about Plotinus' thought.

15

PRAYER

I

Plotinus is very often called a religious philosopher. It is often claimed, rightly or wrongly, that the whole of the Neoplatonic school is permeated by a religious spirit of dubiously Greek ancestry.[1] It would certainly be possible to make a good case that had Plotinus not enjoyed certain experiences which we should tend to call religious, he would not have written a word of philosophy at all. Yet there are certain common religious attitudes which seem to have interested him not at all. One of these was the public cult of the Gods, which from time to time attracted his adherents. In the tenth chapter of his *Life of Plotinus* Porphyry records the attentions paid by Amelius to the observance of holy days and adds that on one occasion he invited Plotinus to participate in some such kind of religious activity, but Plotinus refused. His reply 'Let them come to me, not me to them' indicates that he supposed the realm of cult to be far below the proper interest of the philosopher. His business was not with the *daimones*, the noblest form of being with whom the general public might be expected to concern itself, but with the search for the highest life and the return of the self to its source in the One.

Now popular manifestations of belief such as interested Amelius would involve prayer and sacrifice. And indeed the traditionally religious man is supposed to be a man of prayer. Are we to assume that Plotinus' lack of interest in cult indicates a belief that prayer is only a rather low form of religious activity which should be dispensed with as time-wasting, if not actually harmful, by the seriously philosophic mind? If this were so, we should have one pointer to a fundamental distinction between Plotinus' 'religion' and most modern religious attitudes. Such distinctions are commonplaces in the books of

those who write on Plotinus. Have we here a piece of good evidence on their behalf? In order to answer such a question we must examine all those parts of the *Enneads* where the subject of prayer is raised—there are however regrettably few of them—in an attempt to determine the consistency and motivation of Plotinus' real position. Such an investigation will involve us, as we might expect, in a further consideration of the effect of various predecessors, in particular Plato and the Stoics, and in an evaluation of what prayer meant to the average man living in the ancient world. The latter point is most important, for men are always ready to do what Plotinus steadfastly refused to do, namely attempt a short cut to success in the art of obtaining divine favours.

Since Plato is in Plotinus' eyes the unsurpassed master of those who know, and since his every word is liable to be interpreted or reinterpreted in rather strange ways, we should not overlook any peculiarity of his attitude to prayer which may bear on our present enquiry. At various times from the *Euthyphro* to the *Laws* Plato expresses interest in prayer. The idea he has of it seems to be a rather mundane and unambitious one. According to the *Laws* (801 A) prayers are requests directed to the Gods, and since anything concerned with the Gods should be handled with great care, it must be ensured that those who pray do not make mistakes when they pray, asking for evil in the belief that it is good. But although such prayers are to be a regular part of life for the citizens of the ideal state, Plato does not commit himself that they will actually achieve what they seek. The whole process of the improvement of the self is dependent on one's own powers, on the intelligent use of one's own faculties and on the discipline and education one may receive to enable these faculties to be developed. Prayer then might be supposed to be superfluous to the ideal life. All goods *can* be achieved without it, though, if properly indulged, prayer can certainly do no harm and might be supposed to induce the proper attitudes in the citizens.

It is frequently remarked that Plato grows pessimistic in

his old age, and scholars are often moved to sorrow rather than anger by a number of derogatory references to the 'human condition' in the *Laws*. One of the commonest of such motifs is the notion that man is simply a puppet of the Gods. He is said to be such at 644DE, for example, and it is left unclear whether we are devised to be playthings or to have a serious purpose. The comparison of man to a puppet here, however, is introduced by a 'let us suppose'. In 803C, however, though Plato himself alludes to the earlier passage, the 'let us suppose' is dropped, while in 804B the comparison is defended—in reply to the objection of Megillus that the Athenian has a very low opinion of the human race—by the remark that 'When I said that, I had my mind on God'. Clearly compared with God, Plato means to tell us, man will often seem of little significance.

Yet are we to assume from this that the Gods have no interest in human behaviour? No indeed, says Plato. That would be a particularly blasphemous form of 'atheism'.[2] But when Plato comes to describe the ways in which the Gods concern themselves with men, for example in the tenth book of the *Laws* or the second book of the *Republic*, we realize that the rôle they play is that of referee, one might almost say of Guardian. They are like watch-dogs who reward justice and punish injustice. Plato says nothing of their rôle in respect of paying heed to the prayers of the human puppets. In the tenth book of the *Laws* the subject of prayers only comes up when Plato speaks (909B) of those who try to persuade the Gods by the illegitimate and magical use of sacrifices and prayers and incantations. It is true that in 909E we hear of how the state prayers will be carried out, but when Plato mentions the possibility of the Gods' being moved by prayer, he usually has in mind the evildoer's attempt to make the Gods connivers at his crime. The Gods however are the administrators of justice and man is responsible for his own acts. If he prays to the Gods he shows respect and improves his soul by this respect and worship, but when he makes requests—and that, we have

seen, is what Plato tends to think prayers are—then the will of the Gods is inexorable and the significance of prayers seems slight.

In this connection a curious linguistic fact may have some significance. In the fourth century B.C. we meet the phrase ὅμοιον εὐχαῖς and similar expressions which mean something like 'wishful thinking'. According to Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, only three authors use these phrases—and one of them, Isocrates, only once.[3] The other authors are Plato and Aristotle,[4] and we may observe that Plato is far fonder of them than Aristotle. There may be no significance in this whatsoever, but the frequent implication that prayers are mere wishful thinking is strange if the man who makes it believes that they are efficacious. A further source for the idea is the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Theages*,[5] where we hear that to be a god might be the object of one's prayers but not of one's desires, and one might wonder whether the author, in employing such language, imagined that he was sounding typically Platonic. Be that as it may, in view of Plato's general unconcern with the efficacy of prayer, we should not be too surprised if, in the use of the word εὐχή to mean something one might dream of rather than attain, there were a linguistic reflection of Plato's general attitude.

Whatever use then the 'general public' of Plato's ideal states might make of prayer, we may suspect that Plato himself regarded it as moral medicine. And if Plotinus imbibed any of his master's attitudes here, we might suspect that he too would have little time for praying—at least as anything more than as a form of self-discipline. And from Aristotle he would not have learned anything very different. Aristotle's God, as described in the *Metaphysics*, is unconcerned with mortals altogether—he affects the world solely as a final cause, as the object of desire, and there would certainly be no point in praying to him! It is true that in the Aristotelian cosmos 'God and nature do nothing in vain', but the 'providential' ordering of events seems to have no kind of connection with a

divine will and was hardly regarded as providential by the ancients at all. Somehow, quite unconscious of its own workings, there is a principle that draws everything to its fulfilment, but it will do this regardless of man's prayers and sacrifices. Whatever good would it be to pray that an acorn would not grow into an oak-tree if it had the potentiality of life as an oak-tree within it when it was planted!

It is well known that the Epicureans thought prayer valueless (except perhaps as a mark of respect), but Plotinus thinks Epicureanism valueless and rejects all its major attitudes. With the Stoics, however, the matter is very different. Prayer can be valuable for the Stoic sage and is to be defended along with divination and much other traditional religious activity. The explanation of it is in terms of the 'sympathy' of the different parts of the cosmos with one another, and presumably followed lines somewhat similar to those which Plotinus himself uses in *Ennead* 4.4.

With the philosophical background now clear to us and with the general opinion of prayer as little more than a kind of polite hope in our minds, we may turn to Plotinus himself, and first of all to those passages of 4.4 where the traditional (and largely Stoic) view is clearest.

We know that for Plotinus, as for almost all Greeks of post-Platonic antiquity, the heavenly bodies possessed divine souls. Indeed it was from the 'perfect' movements of these souls that the ancients derived one of their strongest arguments for the existence of more than mortal beings. In the world of Plotinus the movements of the heavens exemplified at their best the operations of the World Soul. The traditional Gods of the Greeks were certainly to be associated with the sun, moon and planets. It was to them that the prayers of mankind were unwittingly or wittingly directed. Hence arose the question of whether these prayers were heard and if so how, and whether they were answered. In chapter 25 of *Ennead* 4.4 Plotinus raises the question of whether these astral divinities can have memory, and at the beginning of

26, without previous warning, he plunges straight into the answer to the question 'Can these Gods have knowledge of our prayers?' They have knowledge of these prayers, he says, through a kind of linking together (σύναψιν) of everything in the cosmos, for all is fitted together (ἐναρμοζομένων) in some kind of relation. Hence prayers are not only intelligible to the Gods, but they are fulfilled. And, he adds, the practitioners of magic depend for their success on the same cosmic situation. It is because of the 'sympathy' of the various parts of the cosmos that both prayers can be answered and magic effective. The connection of prayer and magic, which we have observed in the *Laws*, should be observed again here. And we should notice too how Plotinus continues (l. 15). The heavenly bodies, he says, hear those who pray and assent (ἐπινεύειν) to their prayers, not however in the way in which we assent to prayers (that is, presumably, by an action dependent on a decision of the will), but by means of the operation of this 'sympathy' of the cosmos. Hence the heavenly bodies may be said to have some kind of perception.

But there are many further aspects of this subject and Plotinus takes the problem up again in chapter 30. He begins by recapitulating: memory is unnecessary to the stars, but they have perceptions. These perceptions (συμπάθειαι) cause prayers to be heard. (We pray to the sun, he remarks, and there are certain others who pray to the stars.) But a further question arises which has been glossed over in chapter 26. Do the stars answer all our prayers, whether they be demands for good or for evil? Can we imagine that the Gods will be our helpers, for example, in the attainment of loose desires? Furthermore—and there may seem to be a conflict with what appeared earlier in the tract—there is a possibility that replies to our prayers will not be immediate. Does this not imply that the stars have memory? Two fundamental questions are therefore posed: Does not the answering of prayer imply that the stars have memory? What about prayers designed to achieve immoral ends? And there is added to these problems

a third about how far the powers of the workers of magic can affect the cosmos in general.

At the end of chapter 31 we are told that it is an absurdity to imagine the Gods devising how to turn men into thieves, temple-robbers or effeminates, and in the next chapter Plotinus begins his explanation of the answering of prayers. The explanation is, as has already been indicated, in terms of 'sympathy'. The whole cosmos must be regarded as a living being with a body and soul. There is therefore a kind of nervous system, as we might put it, between the different parts. As Plotinus puts it himself (l. 13), 'This One-All, therefore, is a sympathetic total and stands as one living being; the far is near; it happens as in one animal with its separate parts: talon, horn, finger, and any other member are not continuous and yet are effectively near; intermediate parts feel nothing, but at a distant point the local experience is known' (trans. MacKenna-Page).

Chapter 37 of the same *Ennead* gives us more relevant detail before in the following chapter the system of 'sympathy' is applied among other things specifically to prayer. The process of 'sympathetic effect', we learn, works in an almost automatic fashion. 'But productivity does not comport intention (προαίρεσιν) in what appears to be the source of the thing accomplished: there is efficiency, too, where there is no will: even attention is not necessary to the communication of power; the very transmission of soul may proceed without either.

A living being, we know, may spring from another without any intention and, as without loss, so without consciousness in the begetter. . . And, if intention is unnecessary to the propagation of life, much more so is attention.'

We should now be able to see clearly where all this is leading. Just as προαίρεσις (intention, choice) does not apply to the physical act of reproduction, that is, just as men or animals do not realize or intend that conception should take place at any particular moment, nor are they able so to intend, and

since they may thus be said to accomplish their ends without the use of self-consciousness or of memory, so the same process can be observed working within the cosmos at large. Hence at the opening of chapter 38 we find that all effects produced in the cosmos are to be referred to the doer. The doer may be either the cosmos itself (i.e. its soul) or some particular part of the cosmos—such as a man praying or reciting magical incantations. We are to assume that these activities will produce a reaction within the cosmos as a whole. It is worth noticing exactly how Plotinus speaks in this passage. His phrase is: 'By prayers either simple or in the form of magic incantations' (εὐχαῖς ἢ ἁπλαῖς ἢ τέχνῃ ᾠδομέναις). Prayer is regarded, apparently in line with what we saw earlier in this chapter, as a kind of demand, and in fact as a simple variant of that demand, the more complex variant being what we should regard as some kind of magic. Prayer, like magic, is a quasi-scientific means of harnessing certain powers in the cosmos to the service of man. These powers are predictable and can be understood by 'scientific' laws. If we understand the Reason-Principles of the cosmos and the negative effects (ch. 39), we can determine the nature of the 'sympathetic' reactions to any particular behaviour.

Chapter 40 explains the matter in detail. 'How can the effects of magic (γοητεία) be explained?' are its opening words. Plotinus tells us that it is Nature herself who is the true magician. Love, for example, is a force present in Nature, and the magician, when he uses love-charms, is simply making use of that force. The lower parts of the soul, though not the reason, are susceptible to such powers, since they are inseparable from the material world to which they belong and cannot rise up and free themselves from it. And with prayers, continues Plotinus, there is exactly the same phenomenon. The recipient *intends* nothing; there is simply a reaction. Although the recipient, be it sun or star for example (4.4.41.1), will react, it does not *perceive* the situation (οὐκ ἐπαΐει). And hence it is clear that, even if the reaction is delayed, there is no memory

in the heavenly bodies. What happens can be understood by considering the plucking of the string of a lyre. The petitioner plucks one end, as it were, and the other end is affected. When a man prays, he is playing on the harmonious strings of the universe.

Chapter 42 draws conclusions. The stars have no memory, nor do they recognize the petitions which are addressed to them in prayers. They do not act; they simply react. There is nothing surprising if the prayers of evil men are answered. This does not imply that the powers of the universe are in any way the deliberate accessories to crime. An evildoer can draw water from a river, observes Plotinus, without our assuming that the river shares in his crimes. No more should we accuse the powers of the cosmos of being his aiders and abettors when they react in favour of his prayers. So we may conclude that the sun and the stars and the *daimones* within the cosmos in general (4.4.43.14) will hear our prayers and without any conscious policy respond to them.[6]

All these chapters strengthen the impression that prayer is on the same level as magic, indeed that it is a kind of magic and that it is only the concern of those men who are unable to live on a higher level of reality than that of the world of particulars around them. And the impression is further strengthened by the fact that such magical activities are repeatedly said to concern the lower man, and that the sage, who lives at a higher level, is free from concern with them and unaffected by them. How does the sage (σπουδαῖος) stand in relation to magic (4.4.43.1)? In his soul he is unaffected by it (ἀπαθής). It is only his irrational part which is affected. (We may note here the tendency to equate the soul simply with the reasoning element.) What is withdrawn to itself (τὸ πρὸς αὐτό, l. 18) is free from all magical effects, for contemplation is beyond such things (4.4.44.1).

Contemplation, the highest activity of man, is then to be thought of as an activity at an altogether higher level than prayer. Prayer is not for Plotinus wishful thinking, but rather

a concern with matters of little fundamental importance. It is to be explained with the arguments of Stoicism, but what for Stoicism might be a concern of importance—namely the recognition and employment of the fact that man is intimately associated with the powers of the material world—is far from important for Plotinus. The Stoic God is the world and is immanent in the world; the One of Plotinus is transcendent and ultimately remote and unconcerned with transient things. If Plotinus' explanation of the efficacy of prayer is Stoic, his evaluation of it looks more like the evaluation of the most pessimistic of Platos or the most unconcerned of Aristotles.

And there are also passages in the late *Ennead* 3.2 (on Providence) which tend towards the Platonic attitude at its most pragmatic. When a gang of young toughs attacks a number of their more respectable but morally and physically spineless contemporaries and strips them of their finery, says Plotinus (3.2.8), the incident calls merely for a laugh. The gymnasium is at hand if people want to take the trouble to keep themselves in training. Similarly in warfare a God should not fight for those who do not bother themselves with military training. The law of the universe is that it is not people who pray who will come safely out of battle, but those who are courageous. Similarly by praying no one will secure a harvest. That will come to the man who concerns himself with farming. And in general it is ridiculous for us to expect the Gods to look after us if we live our lives as we feel like it, rather than in the way they have told us will bring happiness. Even the language in which Plotinus expresses some of these sentiments is of interest: 'It is not *necessary* that God fight for the unwarlike (οὐ θεὸν ἔδει)...the law says that the brave will be saved (ὁ νόμος φησὶ δεῖν).' The 'sympathy' of the parts of the universe will not help us in these circumstances. Why not? Presumably because we are praying for the impossible. We are asking for things which if they could be granted would presuppose a world ordained differently from our present one. For just as 'sympathy' is a *law* of the cosmos, it must imply other laws,

and to neglect the existence of these other laws will bring inevitable trouble. And indeed the Gods have warned us of this already. It is up to us to look after ourselves. No one can say he has not been warned!

The same terminology recurs in the next chapter (3.2.9). We hear in lines 6–10 of what 'the law' decrees will be the fate of good men and bad. And one particular point is stressed. 'It is not lawful (οὐ θεμιτόν) that the bad should expect that *by prayers* they can bring it about that good men should sacrifice their own interests to look after their inferiors.' The word 'saviours' is used of such good men who are expected to sacrifice themselves for society. And the implications of this word lead Plotinus on to a more fundamental point. It is also unlawful, he continues, to expect that the Gods will lay aside their own life to direct the daily concerns (τὰ καθέκαστα) of the wicked or that good men (philosophers?) should give up a life superior to that of earthly authority to take over the reins of government. All such prayers are unlawful, Plotinus insists. They are designed in effect to upset the providential ordering of the universe, where man is master of his own destiny.

II

Ennead 5.8.9 may seem to introduce the possibility of a rather different picture from the one we have so far been constructing. In line 12 Plotinus invites men to 'call on God, maker of the sphere whose image you now hold, and pray him to enter' (θεὸν καλέσας. . . εὖξαι ἐλθεῖν). Our first problem is the nature of the God to whom men are to pray.[7] The matter must be treated in detail. One thing is immediately apparent. Plotinus is not referring here to the World Soul. The 'sphere whose image you now hold' is the visible cosmos and we must look for its maker. And any Platonist knows that it is the Forms which are in some sense the makers of particulars.[8] That this intuition is correctly applied to our passage of the *Enneads* is apparent from Plotinus' own words: 'Keep this sphere before you (l. 10) and from it imagine another, a sphere stripped

of magnitude and of spatial differences; cast out your inborn sense of matter, taking care not merely to attenuate it: call on God', etc. The immaterial sphere which is informed by God is the world of Forms. And the God must be Νοῦς, for, as Plotinus says, 'he is one God and all the Gods'. In comparison with that world, our world, great though it is, is material (l. 28). There is the beauty of Being and reality (l. 36).

The import of the passage is clear. The God whom we are to invoke is neither the World Soul nor the powers of that Soul, as our previous discussion would have led us to expect, but Νοῦς. But what sort of prayers should be used? And what effect can they have? It is at least certain that the kind of prayer which is merely a variety of magic will be useless here, for 'sympathy' is a quality of the domain of the World Soul, and while prayers and magic affect the unreasoning elements in the cosmos, they can hardly affect the Divine Mind, the power of intellection itself. But unfortunately the answers to these questions are not to be found in this chapter.

That Plotinus supposed that each of us has a guardian spirit is well known. Such a belief was part of the Platonic tradition deriving from the myth of Er in the *Republic* and from the *Timaeus*.[9] As Plotinus puts it in a rather curious passage of *Ennead* 3.5.6, 'A spirit-guide (δαίμων) is the remaining trace produced by each soul when it is born into the cosmos'. And he then goes on to explain that what corresponds to a spirit-guide for a soul which is pure (apparently meaning 'free from the cosmos') is a God. Now we have seen already how *daimones* can be the objects of prayer, and how they can react: might we not suppose that, for the pure, prayer to God might have a similar effect? If prayer in the ordinary sense works by 'sympathy', that is, by something akin to the effect of like upon like, might there not be a similar possibility of the effectiveness of certain sorts of prayers to the world of Forms, to Νοῦς, or even perhaps to the One?

The guardian-spirit which belongs to a soul which is not

involved in the cycle of births and deaths is a God. As Armstrong has pointed out,[10] however, the sage attains such a state while in the body. Plotinus makes this explicit in the opening lines of 3.4.6. The *daimon* of the sage is not merely Νοῦς but the One itself. So if we may pray to the *daimon* which is Νοῦς in 5.8.9.13, the sage will presumably pray to the One itself and expect to receive benefit from so doing. It only remains to try to determine what will be the nature of his prayer and the manner in which it will achieve its end. Unfortunately there is only one clear indication of what Plotinus has in mind.

At the opening of *Ennead* 5.1.6 Plotinus states his intention of trying to understand how it is that plurality of any kind could arise from the One. His next sentence must be quoted in full. 'In venturing an answer, we first invoke God himself, not in loud word but in that way of prayer which is always within our power, leaning in soul towards him by aspiration, alone towards the Alone' (Ὧδε οὖν λεγέσθω θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐπικαλεσαμένοις οὐ λόγῳ γεγωνῷ, ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ ἐκτείνασιν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς εὐχὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον, εὔχεσθαι τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον δυναμένους μόνους πρὸς μόνον). It is clear from this passage that the God to whom prayers are directed is the One, and that we are here dealing with the prayers of a sage capable of attaining the mystic vision.[11]

Such prayers are of a special kind. They are not the loud-mouthed and traditional utterances (has Plotinus used the archaic word γεγωνῷ with the intention of emphasizing the purely ritual aspect of much of ancient supplication?);[12] rather they are unspoken prayers, prayers which arise from a soul whose passions are stilled and silent and which will attain its vision in that silence which for Plotinus is a clear note of the presence of the One.[13] Theiler has pointed out that the idea of prayer as a 'leaning of the soul' (ἐκτείνασιν ἑαυτούς) towards its object is Stoic,[14] but Peterson has added that in this section of the *Enneads* Plotinus goes beyond Stoicism.[15] The key to the passage is the metaphorical significance which

Plotinus gives to the μόνους πρὸς μόνον. Prayer is a means of uniting the One in ourselves with the One in itself. Plotinus has himself told us elsewhere in a very beautiful passage that we should not over-estimate the sense of straining in the word ἐκτείνασιν (as the Stoics did?).[16] His words are as follows: 'We ought not to pursue the vision, but to remain in quietness till it appears, after preparing ourselves to be viewers of it, just as the eye awaits the rising of the sun.' The vision is not to be forced; we cannot claim it at any particular time or as a direct result of any particular behaviour. When we have prepared ourselves and made ourselves fit, all we can do is wait. This preparing of oneself, this meditation and reflection on the One by a soul which is not distracted by the multiplicity of things, is what Plotinus thinks of as the highest kind of prayer.

Plotinus' view of prayer is lofty, far removed from the normal Greek views which he tends to explain in terms of the lower aspects of his own system. He speaks of this higher conception solely in our present passage, though, as we have seen, there are indications elsewhere in his works that some such idea would fit into his general philosophical outlook. There is nevertheless one important final point to make—a point which will show a common thread running through Plotinus' higher and lower prayers. The effectiveness of prayers depends upon a recognition of the facts of the universe. As in the lower prayer the petitioner causes an 'automatic' and 'sympathetic' response, so with the higher there is no question of a conscious turning of the One to the soul.[17] When a man prays 'alone to the Alone', he has come to recognize that the One is always present and that it is up to himself to look towards him if he wishes. The higher prayer, like the lower, is a recognition *by man* of what the universe is like. The One is always turned towards us; in the highest act of prayer we turn again towards him.

16

MYSTICISM

Most people who have heard of Plotinus have heard of him as a mystic. He is sometimes called the 'father of Western mysticism'. It is certain that through his direct or indirect influence mystical ideas have become more widespread and that in his language many later mystics have found themselves the means to express their experiences. This being so, we should expect that the 'mysticism' of Plotinus himself would by now be thoroughly understood. That, however, is by no means the case. Although innumerable commentators have handled this subject,[1] we find that, however learned they may be in other aspects of Neoplatonism, here they become amazingly confused, woolly, and sometimes even too impatient to put up with the difficulties of their author. One basic problem with many works on mysticism is that their authors tend to either of two dogmatic positions, neither of which is helpful to an understanding of Plotinus. One school supposes that mystics are basically all alike, all representatives of the *philosophia perennis* which transcends religions and cultures; the other that all non-Christian mystics are not mystics at all. Then there are those who dislike mysticism on principle, and therefore try to exclude it from the *Enneads* altogether,[2] and those who think that 'the vision of the One is no part of his (Plotinus') philosophy, but is a mischievous accretion'.[3] Such 'mischievous accretions' are often supposed to be of Oriental origin.

Behind all these peculiarities of interpretation lies the basic difficulty to which we have already alluded: the problem of the nature of mysticism itself. The fact is that 'mysticism' is a blanket term used to describe many different varieties of experience, and those interpreters of Plotinus who speak as though he were a pantheist one moment, a monist the next

and theist the next hardly give their author much credit for consistency and intelligence. The truth appears to be that they have not examined the text closely enough. Such an examination is therefore the aim of this chapter, and in order to try to avoid some of the vagaries of other writers on this subject we shall take as a guide R. C. Zaehner's *Mysticism: Sacred and Profane*,[4] a book whose importance for the study of mysticism is so great as to make much of what has previously been written look like pointless maunderings.[5]

One of Zaehner's major aims is to distinguish four types of what is commonly called mysticism. The first of these is the pantheistic or natural mystical experience, which Zaehner prefers to call 'panenhenic' since God has little to do with a mysticism whose aim is to merge the individual soul with the natural world; the second is the complete isolation of the soul from nature by asceticism; the third is 'monistic', where the individual soul is declared to be completely identical with the power behind the universe—Ātman is Brahman, as the Indian monists would put it; the fourth is theistic mysticism, where the isolated soul attains to union and is 'oned' with a transcendent God, though *a fortiori* it is not itself identical with that God. It is unfortunate that Zaehner himself has not attempted to place Plotinus within this framework, for had he done so there would have been no need for this chapter; we should have known already whether Plotinus is the classical example of a pantheist in the Western tradition,[6] whether his thought bears so close a resemblance to the monism (as defined above) of many of the *Upanishads* that some immediate connection must be sought between them,[7] or whether neither of these views is correct.

Turning now to the texts themselves, therefore, we must first consider the question of the transcendence of the One. At first sight one might suppose that, since Plotinus again and again speaks of the ascent of the soul,[8] the transcendence of the One over the soul would at least be obvious. Yet those who talk of Plotinus' pantheism deny it just as much as they neglect

the countless passages where the One is said to be beyond (ἐπέκεινα) the Forms. Their reply perhaps would be that metaphors of ascent are not the only ones employed by Plotinus when he speaks of the soul's journey. He also frequently talks of returning or 'awakening' to our inner selves.[9] Yet knowing ourselves, Plotinus tells us, means knowing our origin;[10] and there are a number of passages which call the One a father or speak of the return of the soul to its source as an odyssey to one's fatherland.[11] All this, however, might be dismissed as the subjective utterance of a mystic who had ceased to be aware of the difference between the self and the One and whose remarks on the subject of personal ascent should therefore be viewed with some suspicion. In order to allay this suspicion we must turn to Plotinus' metaphysical statements about the nature of the world and its cause. The most important of these for our purpose are at 5.5.12.47, where pantheism is specifically denied ('He is not the all') and where the One is said to have made all things and left them to themselves, and at 6.8.19.18, where these things which he has made are said to be outside himself.[12]

Yet, as Arnou has made abundantly clear,[13] the One is immanent as well as transcendent. It is 'present with' its products, though separate from them. If it were not, how could ascent to it be possible at all? But Plotinus repeatedly tells us that we have such a power within us, within all of us, which few of us make use of, but which would enable any of us who wished to realize his highest potentialities and attain to union with the One.[14] What then can be concluded at this early stage? Surely that pantheistic, or, as Zaehner would call it, 'panenhenic', mysticism must be ruled out of our discussion of the *Enneads*. There is no possibility that union with the One, whether thought of as inside or outside the soul of the individual—and we shall consider these terms later—can be a pantheistic union with the world. The One is not all things; it is the power behind all things (δύναμις πάντων).[15] Union with it is therefore not union with all things: it is an

ascent beyond any finite thing, and everything other than the One is finite. Even if Plotinus taught no more than union with the World Soul he would not be preaching pantheism, for his World Soul is not identical with the world, as it is for the Stoics, but is the transcendent governor of the world. The attainment of union with the World Soul would not then be a pantheistic union, but at the very least the isolation of the soul from material things and its integration with the ruling principle of the material universe. The only people who can call Plotinus a pantheist, therefore, must be those who either entirely neglect those texts of the *Enneads* which fix the One above the physical universe or those who identify pantheism with monism, that is, suppose that complete identity with the material universe is another way of describing complete identity with the cause of that universe. A pantheist would say that the One and matter are identical and that there is a reconciliation of good with evil. Plotinus cannot be imagined holding either of these views. No reader of the *Enneads* will find a word to suggest that union with the One is a union with matter, or that matter is the One (rather, as 1.8 and 2.4 especially teach, matter is absolute non-entity), or that the evil man has any hope of attaining to union with the One. Virtue and vice are not transcended; the philosopher must be a virtuous man.[16] Logically pantheism must lead to antinomianism, that is, in Plotinus' day, to various kinds of Gnosticism. There is nothing of this kind in the *Enneads*. As Plotinus puts it,[17] 'Virtue which progresses to its goal and is born in the soul with wisdom points to God. Without real virtue it is mere words to talk of God.'

Yet disposing of talk of pantheism is only the beginning of the task before us. We must now turn to the much more difficult business of analysing the *Enneads* in terms of what Zaehner calls 'monistic' or 'theistic' mysticism. We can perhaps best begin with a general account of some of the basic metaphors used by Plotinus to describe the mystic's journey. We have already seen these in our discussion of the trans-

cendence of the One. The soul *ascends* to the One, or *withdraws* from the external world to itself, or *returns* to its source or fatherland. These metaphors do little at first sight to help us with the present problem. It might turn out that, when the external trappings are stripped away, the soul and its source are seen to be identical and that the transcendence of the One is only a transcendence over the trappings; or it might be that the soul is then freed from its encumbrances and able to recognize its source clearly. The 'fatherland' language would suggest the latter solution, but such language itself might be only an inadequate representation of the true relationship between the soul and the One, a relationship which cannot be made clear to those who have not experienced it.

There is no need to go through the familiar early stages of the soul's ascent by purifications, asceticism and love from the world of sense to the world of Soul and from the world of Soul to the world of pure Form or intellect, the world of Νοῦς. The process has been described often enough,[18] and the call to attain 'likeness to God' rings through the *Enneads*.[19] For our present purposes we shall consider only the soul in the world of Forms, wholly characterized by the virtues, and in every way like the God of Intellect. For Plotinus, however, this is not the end of the road: Νοῦς is not pre-eminently simple, pre-eminently all-embracing. Likeness to God in the full sense must mean an ascent beyond the realm of the finite Forms to the realm of the infinite One whose dominant character of simplicity (ἁπλωσις) is emphasized throughout the whole of the *Enneads*.[20] The One is pre-eminently simple and to attain likeness to it we too must be pre-eminently simple. Hence Plotinus' cry through all the stages of the 'mystic way' is the more insistent here: 'Strip away everything';[21] 'put away all shape'; 'the man who lets every Form go will see'.[22] If we see the One by being like it, and the One itself is unspeakable[23] and hard to tell of,[24] we ourselves can hardly expect to see it if we are still characterized by the finite Forms.

Yet here we come to the first real difficulty. What does the phrase 'likeness to God' mean for Plotinus? Is he talking about similarity, or absolute identity? Is the One to be like the soul or identical and interchangeable with the soul? Guthrie, following Joel,[25] has noticed that from the time of pre-Platonic Pythagoreanism this question had arisen in Greek thought, for the word for 'same' (ὅμοιος) also means 'similar'. Is it possible that Plotinus slid from thinking of 'similarity to God' to 'identity with God'? If he did, then his commentators, who talk as if he were both 'theistic' and 'monistic', in Zaehner's senses of these terms, are at least not misrepresenting him in so doing, even if they are not themselves aware of the source of their confusion. The solution to this may appear when we examine Plotinus' language in more detail.

Our next problem then is to determine how Plotinus distinguishes the three levels of reality: the One, Νοῦς and the Soul. If we can decide this, we can see how the ascending soul, standing at the level of pure thought, will be able to advance to the union with the One itself. We have already observed one distinguishing feature of the hypostases: as reality proceeds away from the One its 'simplicity' is lessened and its 'multiplicity' increases. This is commonly expressed by saying that the One is pure unity, the Νοῦς is a unity-in-multiplicity and the Soul is the level of unity *and* multiplicity. Hence the ascent of the soul, as we have also seen, will be a process of more and more rigorous 'simplification'.

But Plotinus has an alternative way of describing the growth of 'multiplicity'. It is, as he puts it, the ever-increasing presence of 'otherness', by which he means lack of similarity. The language is fairly frequent in the *Enneads* and has not escaped the commentators.[26] 'The One is the cause of things and not a material substrate (οὐκ ἐνυπάρχει); rather it is other than all things (ἕτερον ἁπάντων).'[27] At 6.9.8.31 ff. it is explained that incorporeal objects are not separated spatially, but by 'otherness and difference' (ἑτερότητι καὶ διαφορᾷ).

When this otherness is absent, continues Plotinus, those things which are not other (τὰ μὴ ἕτερα) are present with one another. This passage, to which we shall return later, deals with the mystical union itself. To achieve such union it is most important that such difference, such separation, be brought to an end. Then the soul will be raised to its source.

Even at a lower level than the One and its immediate products, the language of 'otherness' occurs. What is the difference between Soul and Noῦς? At those times when Soul is raised to the pitch of Noῦς there may be no difference between them except that they are different things,[28] like perfectly identical twins if there could ever be such (οὐδὲν γὰρ μεταξὺ ἢ τὸ ἑτέροις εἶναι). Similarly therefore at the highest level, the One is always 'present with' Noῦς; it is only separated by otherness (ὡς τῇ ἑτερότητι μόνον κεχωρίσθαι).[29]

Plotinus finds himself in difficulties with his terminology at this point. He wants us to realize that we are never 'cut off' from the One (οὐ γὰρ ἀποτετμήμεθα, 6.9.9.7),[30] nor wholly separate from it (the doctrine of immanence), yet that nevertheless there is a difference between the others and the One (the doctrine of transcendence). At 6.9.10.19 the difference (ἕτερον) is explained as separateness (χωρίς). Perhaps we may say that the One is separate but not unconnected, indeed is fundamentally connected. At any rate, terminology aside, the general position is clear: there is an 'otherness' which separates the products of the One from the One itself. As 2.4.5.30 makes abundantly clear, it is the very characteristic of the first product of the One, namely the substrate of the Intelligible World or 'intelligible matter', to be 'other' than its source. The problem facing the student of Plotinus' mysticism is clear. Can this 'otherness' which divides the soul from the levels of Noῦς and the One be annihilated, and what would the consequences be of such an annihilation for Plotinus' system in general, or at least for the nature of his mysticism? If we are able to see clearly as far as this, we may be able to go further and come to some conclusions on the affinity or non-affinity

of Plotinus' system with various theories current outside the Graeco-Roman world.

We are then to lay aside the World of Forms and progress to the One. It should not be assumed from this that the World of Forms or even the lower stages of the ascent are valueless. A virtuous life is the first prerequisite even to begin the climb. There is no short cut which would dispense the philosopher from the hard discipline in dialectic (l. 3) required to reach the level of Νοῦς. Ascent to the One must be through Νοῦς, as we read again and again throughout the *Enneads*, but also finally beyond Νοῦς. And here is the greatest and most mysterious step of all.

As Plotinus specifically tells us, to proceed beyond Νοῦς is to take a leap,[31] and in a sense it is a leap into the unknown. There is even a sense of fear attached to it, fear in 5.5 lest we fail to achieve our end through imputing any kind of duality to that which we are seeking, and fear, as we read in the more striking 6.9.3.7, lest the approach to the One be a deception, and a grasp of the infinite turns out to be a grasp of nothingness. The degree of trust required of the mystic must itself be infinite. To attain the One it is necessary to cast oneself forward with the fullness of one's being (ἀθρόως, 5.5.10.8) and grasp the One with a wide awareness and receptivity (6.7.35.21).[32] This receptivity is a tremendous demand on the self. Fear must arise at this point when the soul, having hitherto been limited to the finite, has to open itself to receive the infinite One. This is the nearest Plotinus comes to the notion of mystical darkness so common in Christian writers, and we should notice the peculiarly Plotinian attitude. If we have interpreted him aright, Plotinus' dilemma arises on a metaphysical rather than a moral plane. Can the soul, which has hitherto only recognized its finite manifestations, dare to live on a newly desired infinite plane?

The problem is how to put otherness away. How can one become like the One? Plotinus refers directly or indirectly to this stage of the mystic's progress on a number of occasions.

When one has made the leap towards union, the result is the achieving of some kind of contact (6.9.8.29). We shall return to this metaphor later. Let us for the moment see how the question of otherness is involved. This contact, Plotinus continues, is by likeness (ὁμοιότητι);[33] it is a grasp of the One by a power in us that is like the One (3.8.9.22–3); it is by sameness (ταὐτότης), though we should not make the mistake at this stage of translating this word as 'absolute identity' (6.9.8.29);[34] it is by a kinship between the One and ourselves (τῷ συγγενεῖ, 6.9.8.29). At the time of the union it would not be possible to distinguish between the soul and its source (6.7.34.14). It is a case of two things which have no qualitative difference being present one with another (τὰ μὴ ἕτερα πάρεστιν, 6.9.8.33). All difference is now removed (6.9.11.9) and they have come together (6.9.10.7). In all these descriptions, as Arnou has pointed out,[35] there is talk of 'separates', 'others', 'coming together' (σύν), 'being present with one another' (παρά). At this stage it would seem premature therefore to talk about absolute identity, despite Plotinus' use of the word ταὐτότης.

We often speak of Plotinus' account of the mystic *vision*. And it is certainly true that, following the *Symposium*, as Porphyry recalls,[36] Plotinus very frequently uses such language. We see the One, or contemplate it, or see light by light.[37] But faithful to Plato though he may wish to be, Plotinus cannot remain satisfied with this language. The aim of the mystic is not a *seeing*, but a *being*. It is not vision but union which is the goal and end of life. Hence Plotinus has to say, as has often been noticed, that this language of vision, of seeing, of contemplating, is inadequate. It is another kind of seeing with which we are concerned here (6.9.11.22). Our aim is not to see the One, but to be 'oned', as later mystics would have translated it (μὴ ἑωραμένον ἀλλ' ἡνωμένον). And this is only what we might have expected, for if we are to become *like* the One, how are we going to contemplate something outside ourselves when the One does not do so? If we did, we should not be

like it. And if we were not like it we should not have attained our goal. Hence, as we have already noticed,[38] instead of metaphors of seeing we frequently find metaphors of touch, and it is to these that we should now turn our attention.

We have already observed the description of union as making contact (συνάπτω). Cognates of this word ἅπτω are to be found frequently: ἐφάψασθαι φωτὸς ἐκείνου at 5.3.17.34; ἔφεσις πρὸς ἁφήν at 6.9.11.24; οἷον ἐπαφή at 5.3.10.42, a passage where the word 'touching' (θίξις) also occurs. And looking further we find προσαψάμενοι at 6.7.40.2, συνημμένον at 6.9.4.8, ἐπαφή again in 6.7.36, θιγεῖν again in 6.9.4 and 6.9.7. This then is the 'other kind of seeing'; it is a form of contact. Hence too all those words denoting the *presence* of the soul *with* the One which Arnou has noticed.

But what kind of contact is it? As we see in 1.2.6, words like ἐπαφή, like words of seeing, apply to the soul at the level of Νοῦς as well as to the soul in union with the One. Contact, though clearly implying a closer association than vision, might seem to involve two substances placed side by side in such a way that they still, as it were, look different. It seems that it was to avoid this kind of misinterpretation that Plotinus used the language of 'blending' and 'mixing' to describe the union[39] and to draw the comparison with lovers. Such language has unnecessarily disturbed Arnou. His comment on the matter is as follows:[40] 'Cette unité n'est pas un mélange (bien que les mots le fassent entendre parfois, 6.9.11; 1.6.7; συγκερασθῆναι), ni une fusion, ni une composition, mais le contact de deux substances spirituelles que ne sépare aucune "différence" et qui par là même sont unies, unies comme peuvent l'être de substances spirituelles, aussi parfaitement que possible.' In a note on this passage Arnou refers to the important text at 6.9.10.17, where Plotinus speaks of the 'convergence' of centres as an appropriate metaphor for the union of the soul and the One, but he does not seem to grasp why Plotinus has used these words of 'blending' and indeed feels inclined to apologize for them.

Now apart from the important comparison of the One and the soul with two lovers, to which we shall return, it should be realized that this language of 'blending' seems to be a deliberate attempt on Plotinus' part to indicate that even 'touching' will not describe the proper situation at the moment of unity. It is a 'touching', a 'contact' of such a kind that it is impossible to 'see' the distinctions: 'One could not distinguish them, while they are present' (6.7.34.14). It is not a question of a literal blending of such a kind that there is no distinction but an association of such a kind that the *metaphor* of blending is the most appropriate description. This is why the further metaphor of the converging centres of circles in 6.9.10 is perhaps the most apt description of all, the description which enables us to understand this peculiar combination of 'touching' and 'blending' the best. As MacKenna translates it, 'centre coincides with centre, for centres of circles, even here below, are one when they unite and two when they separate: and it is in this sense that we now (after the vision) speak of the Supreme as separate'. If a man draws a point on a piece of paper and then marks another point on top of the first, who could tell how many points had been drawn? Could not the points be said to have 'blended'?

And from the question of the 'blending' we can proceed to the giving up of the self, to the state of rapture in the divine. Here again the frequency of the relevant phrases in the *Enneads* leaves Plotinus' position in no doubt. The soul is as though enraptured or possessed (ὥσπερ ἁρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας, 6.9.11.13); it is filled with God (6.9.9.21);[41] it is possessed (καταληφθείς, 5.8.10.11). All this suggests that the soul is dominated and characterized by its source, and this is what Plotinus goes on to say, for the soul surrenders (διδούς, 5.5.8.11), abandons itself (ἐπίδοσις αὐτοῦ, 6.9.11.24), and—a bold phrase, as Plotinus admits—is 'not wholly itself' (οὐδ' ὅλως αὐτός, 6.9.11.12). This last idea appears again at 6.9.10.15, where we read that in a sense (οἷον) the soul has become other and is not itself; it stands outside itself (ἔκστασις,

6.9.11.23). Here then is how 'otherness' is lost. The soul breaks the bounds of the finite and can as it were scarcely be recognized as what it was before, just as the centres of the circles cannot be recognized as distinct.

The finite self, then, is lost. Does this imply monism in the sense in which we have been using the word in this chapter? Is the self now seen to be identical with the One? At first sight once again the language would be against such an interpretation. If one surrenders, one surrenders to someone. Does Plotinus mean that one surrenders to oneself? There is no evidence in the texts that this is what he means, any more than there is evidence that being filled with God means being filled with the self. We are not dealing with the isolation of the self from all other things as an end in itself; we are dealing with the isolation of the self from the finite in order that it may surrender itself and be fully receptive to the Infinite (ἐπιβολῇ τινι καὶ παραδοχῇ).

This view of the situation is supported by the variety of texts which speak of the 'sudden appearance' of the One. True, we are back here to the inadequate language of vision, but Plotinus employs it frequently enough for it to be worthy of notice; and the idea of a sudden appearance or presence could be relevant both to the language of vision and to the language of touch and contact.

The notion that the vision suddenly (ἐξαίφνης) appears is, as has often been observed, most recently by Henry,[42] derived from the *Symposium* (210E). Plotinus uses it repeatedly: at 5.3.17.28; 5.5.7.32ff.; 5.5.3.13; 6.7.34.13. More interesting than these, however, for our present point of view are two further passages, 6.7.36.18 and 5.5.8.4. In the former Plotinus speaks of the soul at the level of intuitive knowledge, of Νοῦς, being suddenly 'swept along by the very crest of the wave of Νοῦς surging beneath'.[43] It is as though the soul suddenly lost its previous bearings and entered upon a new world, the world of the One. This hardly fits the notion of the monistic isolation of the soul. The second passage, 5.5.8.4, is similar—that

beautiful section of the *Enneads* where Plotinus urges us not to 'pursue' the vision, but to await its arrival quietly and prepare oneself, 'just as the eye awaits the rising sun'. This passage does not suggest that the coming of the One is a 'special grace' for the mystic, or that, as Aubin thinks,[44] there is a 'turning' of the One in the direction of the seeker. There is no turning, for, as we have already seen, this is unnecessary. The One is already present to those who seek him. The One has done, and done from eternity, all that is needful to ensure the possibility of the mystic vision. The One is always present. There is no 'otherness' in the One. The 'turning' is our responsibility. We have the power, derived from the One, of re-ascending. We must make use of the power available to us. If we 'pursue' the One, of course we shall always tend to specify it, to see it under some particular aspect. We must learn instead to be passive, to let it come, as it will come if we take away our own restlessness, that very restlessness which prevents us from being like it.

And if we wait in patience—provided we have reached the vision of the World of Forms—what will happen? Once again we must insist that the description of the convergence of 'centres', of which Plotinus is so fond, will afford the most accurate commentary. Each of our souls has a centre.[45] When we are concentrated upon this centre, we are fully ourselves and 'in the Supreme'. But all other souls have centres, and one can imagine a centre of centres. Through the centre of our soul we contact this centre of centres.[46] Here again there would seem to be a refutation of the soul's absolute identity with the One. Were the soul and the One equivalent, there would be no need to speak of a centre of centres. Yet perhaps the matter needs still further elucidation.

The union of the soul with the One is a union of the alone with the Alone.[47] Does this mean that the alone is the Alone, that, as Bréhier supposed, here was to be found the equivalent of the Indian doctrine that Ātman is Brahman? All evidence so far indicates that it is not. It is now necessary to look at

those crucial passages in which Plotinus speaks of the 'two becoming one', for here, if anywhere, the matter should become clear. May we talk of a union of two? Plotinus seems to be wondering in 6.9.10.12 ff. Should we not say that both are one (ἓν ἄμφω) since they no longer *seem* to be two (οὐδὲ φαντάζεται δύο)? Similar phrases occur elsewhere in the *Enneads* and must be examined in detail:

(*a*) 6.9.11.6–7 'Since they were not two, but the seer was one with the seen, as if it were not seen but "oned"' (ἐπεὶ τοίνυν δύο οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἓν ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ ἰδὼν πρὸς τὸ ἑωραμένον, ὡς ἂν μὴ ἑωραμένον, ἀλλ' ἡνωμένον).

(*b*) 6.9.11.9 'It (the soul) was one' (ἦν δὲ ἕν).

(*c*) 6.9.3.12 'The soul sees it by being with it and by being one with what is itself one' (ὁρῶσα τῷ συνεῖναι καὶ ἓν οὖσα τῷ ἓν εἶναι αὐτῷ).

(*d*) 6.9.10.26 'The soul is one' (ἕν ἐστιν).

(*e*) 6.9.10.22 'How could anyone describe it as other, which when he saw it he did not see as other but as one in relation to himself?' (πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἀπαγγείλειέ τις ὡς ἕτερον, οὐκ ἰδὼν ἐκεῖνο, ὅτε ἐθεᾶτο, ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἓν πρὸς ἑαυτόν;).

(*f*) 6.9.4.4–5 'The soul suffers the loss of its being one and is not absolutely one' (πάσχει δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἓν εἶναι τὴν ἀπόστασιν καὶ οὐ πάντη ἐστὶν ἕν).

(*g*) 6.9.4.24 'Not yet drawn into unity' (μήπω εἰς ἓν συναχθείς).

(*h*) 6.7.35.36 'The two become one' (τὰ δύο ἓν γίνεται).

(*i*) 6.7.34.13–14 'There are no longer two, but both are one' (οὐδ' ἔτι δύο, ἀλλ' ἓν ἄμφω).

(*j*) 5.5.8.21 'Being one with that and not two' (ἓν ἐκείνῳ ὢν καὶ οὐ δύο).

Having collected all these passages dealing with the theme of unity, we are in a better position to draw conclusions. First of all, the argument from silence is of some significance here. Strict monists, those, that is, who assert the complete identity of the soul with the Absolute, often use rather more extreme language than is to be found here to assert this identity. 'Ātman (the soul) is Brahman (the Absolute)' would be the Indian version. Zaehner gives us[48] two equivalents from the Islamic world: Hallāj's 'I am the Truth' (i.e. God), and Abū

Yazīd's 'Glory be to me! How great is my glory'. The Plotinian equivalent would be 'I am the One'. Yet nowhere do we find such an assertion. What we do find is that the soul is one with the One (alone with the Alone). But what about claims like 'the two become one'? First of all we should notice that what looks like such a passage (6.9.10.12ff.) actually says that 'they do not *appear* two'. As we have already seen, two dots superimposed on a piece of paper would not *seem* two but would nevertheless in some sense *be* two. Indeed Plotinus does say (6.7.35.36) that the two *become* one, but we can see now that this should be explained in terms of 5.5.8.21: 'Being one *with* that and not two'. The second point, or in Plotinian language the second centre, might be called one *with* the first, and not two. As Arnou has pointed out, likeness is obtained as far as possible,[49] and in the Plotinian world this means that while the soul as a spiritual substance can be enveloped by the One, enraptured, surrendered, wholly characterized so as to become infinite and not finite,[50] it is neither obliterated nor revealed as the One itself, nor as the *only* spiritual substance.

In the light of this interpretation of the ultimate relation of the soul with its source, the One, we are in a much better position to understand the full significance of the notion of the soul's 'joining the chorus' which Plotinus employs in 6.9. When we look towards the One and realize its presence, we are at the happy end of our journey. We look upon the source of life and sing a choral hymn that is full of God (χορεύουσιν... χορείαν ἔνθεον). This is a singularly apt description of the soul's situation. The members of a chorus are blended together when they sing, but it would be absurd to say that they had no individual differences of any kind. If they were not individuals, they could not form a collective unity. Does this not seem to imply, however, that the One is merely the conglomeration of the various glorified souls? Plotinus' language excludes this possibility. The chorus is 'full of God' or 'inspired'. It is not God. God is in the individuals; the individuals

are not identical with him. As Plotinus has put it in passages we have discussed earlier, the soul is surrendered to God; it is enraptured; it is filled with God; it is not, however, annihilated; it is not identical with God; it is, as the later mystics would say, 'oned' with God.

It is also common to a large number of mystical writers to speak of the soul as feminine; many of them speak of it as a bride and of its theistic goal as a union with the beloved. Since Plotinus' mysticism can now be clearly seen to be of a theistic type, in Zaehner's sense of the word 'theistic', and not 'monistic', we should not be surprised to find similar ideas in the *Enneads*. There are of course many passages where the ascent to the Good is described in terms of the love-imagery of the *Symposium*,[51] and we have looked at some of these already. It is the mind in love, as we read in 6.7.35, that has the power to grasp the One, and in the intoxication of passion,[52] in the stupefaction[53] of its emotion, it is actually identified with overflowing love itself.[54] We can therefore see the identification of the soul with a noble maiden in 6.9.9 in its context. We should notice the feminine nature of the soul. However, Plotinus combines his metaphors of the love of a maiden with his ever-present theme of the absolute transcendence of the One by speaking of her love in the language of physical passion, yet not for a bridegroom but for a noble father. In the light of this we can understand the use of Aphrodite as symbol for soul in general in 5.8.13 and 3.5.3. *Psyche* is a feminine word in Greek, and the soul of the mystic is essentially feminine, provided that mystic does not actually identify himself with his God.

There should by this time be no doubt about the answer we must give to those like Bréhier who invoke the monistic mysticism of the *Upanishads*, the doctrine that Ātman is totally identical with Brahman, to explain the doctrines to be found in the *Enneads*. There is a curious little note in the recent English version of Bréhier's book[55] which tells us that Olivier Lacombe, a specialist in Indian philosophy, has reopened the question of the relation of Plotinus to Indian thought and has

affirmed 'the doctrinal relationship between Plotinus and the Vedanta (i.e. the non-dualist interpretation of the *Upanishads*), in spite of the differences of emphasis'. Yet these so-called differences of emphasis are the fundamental differences between quite different experiences of the world. As Lacombe has written, the triumphant expression of the delivered living which proclaims: 'I am Brahman', 'has no such conspicuous counterpart in the *Enneads*, in which the sentiment of the transcendence of the One appears more emphatically'. This last sentence should settle the matter once and for all. As we have seen, the mysticism of Plotinus is not monistic; according to the experts, however, the mysticism of the *Upanishads* is in the main monistic[56]—and it is precisely this monistic strand that Bréhier tries to find in the *Enneads*. There then in simple terms lies the difference between the two systems. And if the doctrines are unlike, derivation or significant influence can be forgotten.

There remain only a few points which need be cleared up here. If the soul is not absolutely identical with the One, but is at its highest a spiritual substance which is 'oned' with it, then what of the lower parts of the soul, the parts which are transcended in union but are necessary for our everyday life? For the monist such parts are illusion, and they would cease to have any real existence in the sage. For Plotinus, however, if our interpretation is correct, these lower parts would continue to exist even if the uplifted soul had no consciousness of them. Such a position would in fact be the corollary of what Plotinus says about the soul and its awareness in a very interesting pasage of 4.8.8. We recall that all through our normal life there is some part of us which remains above in constant contemplation of the world of Forms,[57] though we are not aware of it. In 4.8.8 a general psychological theory to account, among other things, for this phenomenon is presented. As MacKenna translates it, 'The object of the Intellectual Act comes within our ken only when it reaches downwards to the level of sensation; for not all that occurs at any part of the

soul is immediately known to us; a thing must, for that knowledge, be present to the total soul; thus desire locked up within the desiring faculty remains unknown except when we make it fully ours by the central faculty of perception, or by deliberate choice, or by both at once'. When therefore the higher soul is enjoying the vision of the One, its lower counterparts do not strictly speaking cease to exist, but become irrelevant to the concentrated personality. Not that the union with the One is a 'self-conscious' union, for self-consciousness as normally understood only blunts the activities with which it is concerned,[58] and in the mystical union the self is transcended or rather 'filled with God'.[59]

And indeed in Plotinus' view, and contrary to the opinion of many of the later Neoplatonists, the lower or irrational parts of the soul even survive the death of the body.[60] No part of soul can pass into non-existence, for the soul is, though the lowest of them, yet one of the things which must be immortal. Just as in ordinary life we are not conscious of the contemplation of our higher self, so, when *we* are living at our highest level, we cease to be conscious of our lower selves. Nevertheless, in some sense, our lower selves are still ourselves and not illusion. Hence they cannot pass away. And here again is a distinction between the soul and the One: the soul has a lower self which exists for ever; the One is purely itself.

The soul, then, by its natural kinship with the One can return to its source and be 'oned' with it. Such a return, as Plotinus tells us again and again, is a rest after our labours and a perfect stillness.[61] But this rest is not a rest in nothingness, nor a blankness like dreamless sleep. True it is attained by a kind of 'confusion and annihilation' of Νοῦς,[62] but it cannot be attained without Νοῦς, and should be viewed as the fulfilment rather than the negation of that level of existence. It is not blankness, but rapture, delight and perfect happiness. It is not nothingness—that is a fear which must be surmounted—but everything, in the sense that the One is everything. He who understands the One understands the soul when it is 'oned'.

17

NEOPLATONIC FAITH

In the course of this study various parallels between Christianity and Neoplatonism have come to our notice. It is therefore relevant to conclude with a discussion of Faith, and it is worth going beyond Plotinus to show the full and varied nature of the Neoplatonic attitudes. Everyone has heard of the Christian triad of Faith, Hope and Charity. Scholars of Neoplatonism are familiar with a seemingly comparable triad of Faith, Truth and *Eros*, to which a fourth virtue, Hope, is frequently added. All sorts of explanations have been given of this triad,[1] but Lewy has observed that since none of them has taken the *Chaldaean Oracles* into account, they need not be taken seriously. Leaving Truth and *Eros* and Hope aside, we shall here examine the concept of πίστις, as it will be best to call it, since we shall do well to leave the question-begging translation 'Faith' aside until it is possible to decide whether it is appropriate.

About the significance of the term πίστις there is no semblance of agreement among scholars, because, as so often, there has been no serious attempt to examine the history of the word. The account of Lewy is limited, as far as he can limit it, to the understanding of the *Chaldaean Oracles*;[2] our account is aimed at furthering the knowledge of Neoplatonism. Nevertheless, the work of Lewy is fundamental and reference will continually be made to it.

In his book on Proclus, Rosán remarks that 'it is in this doctrine of faith that the ascent of the soul in Proclus is distinguished from its ascent in Plotinus. For the latter had the soul ascend through love or through truth but not through faith.'[3] 'Proclus', Rosán continues, 'adds this third possibility which opens up a new realm of activity for the soul and provides for the life of the saint. It is very possible that to this

extent he may have been influenced by Christianity.' This statement, for which no real evidence is offered, is flatly opposed by Armstrong.[4] Armstrong holds that Proclus' triad of πίστις, Truth and Hope shows no influence of Christian theology and that 'the *pistis* of Proclus is not Christian faith but Platonic firm rational confidence'. Since it is not impossible that both these views are only half-truths, it is necessary to examine the Neoplatonic concept of πίστις in some detail.

In view of an important technical usage of Plato himself, it would at first sight seem rather surprising to find a Platonist putting a high value on πίστις. At *Republic* 511 E πίστις is the name given to the inferior kind of cognition which is appropriate to the objects of the senses. This usage is repeated at *Timaeus* 29C5, where, most interestingly in view of later development, it is explicitly contrasted with Truth. As Being is to Becoming, so Truth is to πίστις (belief). There are, of course, other meanings of πίστις in Plato apart from this 'technical' one; the most important for our present purposes is probably that of 'belief in the Gods' which we find, for example, at *Laws* 966. But such usages are simply the ordinary Greek senses of the word. The point which should be emphasized about the technical Platonic sense is that πίστις is specifically related to a kind of inferior knowledge of *material objects*.

In Aristotle, πίστις can refer to an intuitive knowledge of first principles or to a sense of conviction which comes after demonstration,[5] but as in Plato there is no kind of emphasis upon it as a fundamental means of knowing or an important faculty of the philosopher. The new and distinct significance only appears in the Greek world with the knowledge of Judaism and Christianity which arose in the Imperial period. As Walzer puts it,[6] 'Pagan Greeks never used πίστις in the same emphatic sense in which Greek-speaking Jews and Christians in Galen's age had accustomed themselves to talk about their confidence in God and their fidelity to Him, and their belief

in revealed, undemonstrated truth'. Walzer has noticed a number of significant passages which show how Judaeo-Christian πίστις and the Hellenic and specifically Aristotelian concept of demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) appear at opposite poles. He is right to point out[7] that Hellenic thought took on many new characteristics with Iamblichus and his successors (it might be safer to say 'after Plotinus') and to observe that an attitude which accorded supremacy to the *Chaldaean Oracles* over rational demonstration would have been impossible to practically everyone of Galen's day. However, since Walzer's view of the nature of post-Iamblichan 'faith' differs from my own, it will be beneficial at this stage only to follow his contrast between πίστις and ἀπόδειξις as it appears in writers earlier than Plotinus. For the time being, we may also leave aside the *Chaldaean Oracles*, since they appear not to have influenced philosophers other than Numenius until the time of Porphyry.

Walzer gives us a version of a fragment of Galen on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where we read:[8] 'If I had in mind people who taught their pupils in the same way as the followers of Moses and Christ teach theirs—for they order them to accept everything on faith—I should not have given you a definition.' Similarly Celsus, a contemporary of Galen, tells us that some of the Christians will not give or hear reason about their beliefs.[9] Clement of Alexandria continually complains in the second book of his *Stromateis* that πίστις is unacceptable to the Greeks. Finally Galen again speaks of the νόμων ἀναποδείκτων of the followers of Moses and Christ.[10]

We can see from these examples that Greeks of the pre-Plotinian period were quite clear that the πίστις of the Christians was not for them. It was irrational; it was very far from any sense of conviction which might arise from demonstration. On the contrary, it was in opposition to demonstration. It was a bogus kind of 'knowledge' which the Platonic philosopher would consider inferior even to the 'knowledge' of material objects that Plato calls πίστις in the *Republic* and *Timaeus*.

Let us now turn to the evidence of Plotinus and consider some of the passages in which he speaks of πίστις, bearing in mind as we proceed the conclusions we have already reached. Perhaps the most illuminating is a section of *Ennead* 4.7.15. Here, at the end of his treatise on the immortality of the soul, Plotinus sums up what he has written on this subject. The previous chapters, he says, should be adequate for those who seek demonstration (πρὸς τοὺς ἀποδείξεως δεομένους). As for those who seek conviction governed by sensation (πίστεως αἰσθήσει κεκρατημένης),[11] they should look at the evidence for immortality which the senses provide: oracles of the Gods which command us to honour the dead as though they were still surviving, and the return to earth of a number of noble souls with revelations which are helpful to their fellow men.

There are a number of interesting features about this passage, not the least of which is the fact that Plotinus thinks it worth while to concern himself with convincing those who will follow πίστις rather than demonstration. Apart from this, however, we should notice the antithesis between demonstration and πίστις itself. Πίστις is being used in a rather Platonic way to denote conviction derived from the experience of the senses, though the validity of this conviction, which Plotinus seems to allow, takes us far away from the Platonic technical term. Πίστις here, however, is also very far from the faith of those who are blessed because they 'have not seen and yet have believed'. Once again, we should observe that its meaning is connected with a 'knowledge' derived from the evidence of the senses.

That Plotinus admits the validity of knowledge by πίστις is evident from *Ennead* 6.9.10.6. Here he is explaining that there is a part of the soul which suffers when the soul withdraws from the vision of the One. Vision, he tells us, then gives way to knowledge by demonstration, by πίστεις and by a dialogue of the soul. This is clearly a reference to dialectical procedures. 'Demonstrations' refers to Aristotelian deductive logic, and the 'dialogue of the soul' to Plato's *Sophist* (264 A).

Πίστις in such company cannot be merely pejorative. It must almost certainly refer again to knowledge derived from other sources, presumably the sources we have already observed in connection with 4.7.15, namely the senses.

In *Ennead* 3.8.6 πίστις occurs again, in a rather different sense, but one which bears out the fact that Plotinus sees nothing pejorative about the word *per se* and which also indirectly confirms our suggestion that the word has some relevance to sense-data and the material world. Contemplation, says Plotinus, remains within through having acquired certainty (πιστεύειν, lines 13–14). The clearer (ἐναργεστέρα) the certainty is, he continues, the more tranquil is the contemplation. Πίστις here is simply a sense of conviction, the *firmitas persuasionis* of Bonitz's Index to Aristotle, but its association with the word ἐναργής is illuminating. We may surmise that the Platonic passage which Plotinus has in mind is *Republic* 511 A 7, but, if so, this is only another example of how Plotinus is prepared to allude to a Platonic text while wholly altering its significance. In fact Plotinus may be thinking not only of Plato but also of Epicureanism, a system in which knowledge depends on the senses and in which Platonic πίστις might be able to secure a more honourable place.

At *Ennead* 6.9.4.31–2 Plotinus tells us that failure to achieve the desired union with the One may be due to lack of a guiding reason to provide conviction (πίστις). People who lack this conviction, he continues, must be won over by reflection such as he goes on to prescribe. But before giving his prescription, in the beginning of the next chapter, there is a *caveat*. Those who believe that the world is governed by chance are excluded from the discussion. Plotinus is only concerned with those who admit extra-temporal reality and have made some progress towards the notion of a soul. Those who are excluded are primarily the Epicureans. What we should like to know is whether Plotinus is led to think of Epicureanism by his talk of πίστις. If we recall that πίστις for him often seems to involve some notion of knowledge of the material world through

the senses, we can easily understand why speaking of it might have brought the Epicureans to his mind, for to them sense-data are the source of knowledge.

There is a further point which is brought out in the account of the Epicurean criteria of knowledge given by Sextus Empiricus. At *Adv. Math.* 7.26 he tells us that for the Epicureans the base and foundation of all is the clear evidence of the senses. The word used is ἐνάργεια—a word whose cognates we have already found in use in Plotinus in close connection with πίστις and which we suspected had also, for Plotinus, some Platonic echoes.

We can at least be sure that ἐνάργεια and its cognates are part of the Epicurean terminology. What we now want is a further indication that when Plotinus thinks of πίστις, he may also think of the notion of ἐνάργεια, if possible in an Epicurean context, for this would give us further indication of the meaning towards which the word πίστις itself may be shifting.

The beginning of *Ennead* 5.5.1 provides us with much of the evidence we need. Plotinus is examining the nature of the Divine Mind and of the knowledge which it possesses. Its knowledge, he says, cannot derive from demonstration (ἀπόδειξις again), but must fundamentally spring up from its own nature. But how, he continues, will we have certainty (τὸ ἐναργές) of this knowledge? Let us consider the evidence of the senses. In this sphere things seem to allow of certain conviction (πίστιν ἔχειν ἐναργεστάτην), yet there remains a doubt lest the apparent reality lie not in the objects themselves, but in the states of the percipient. At this point in their text Henry and Schwyzer refer to *Epicurea*, frr. 244 and 247 in Usener's collection. Fr. 247, from Sextus' *Adv. Mathematicos* 7.203, is the more illuminating. Here it is explained that Epicurus held that φαντασία, which he called ἐνάργεια, and δόξα are correlative. All 'evidence' is equally true. It is just this particular dogma that Plotinus is here doubting. Even when the πίστις seems to be ἐναργεστάτη, he says, we have doubts about the true nature of the situation.

What we have here then is a further use of πίστις in a peculiarly Epicurean context. It is conviction based on sense-data; which is precisely the significance which all the evidence thus far accumulated leads us to believe is frequently found in Plotinus. If then πίστις can mean a sense of conviction based on the evidence of the senses, and if such material-based data could ever, in a 'Platonic' system, attain to an un-Platonic importance, we should expect that πίστις would become a term of fundamental importance, a term still antithetical to ἀπόδειξις, but perhaps no longer inferior to it.

In an earlier chapter we have noticed how many of the inferior forms of prayer are connected by Plotinus with magic,[12] and how their efficacy is said to depend on the 'sympathy' of the different parts of the cosmos. Let us therefore add a few more words on the phenomenon of 'sympathy' in order to place the Plotinian position in full perspective before moving on. In 4.4.40 Plotinus tells us that the efficacy of magic spells is bound up with 'sympathy'; 'sympathy' is said at 3.1.5.8 to determine the growth of animals or plants in terms of the heavenly bodies which influence them; and 'sympathy' certainly also underlies the contemplation which in 3.8.1 is said to be present to a limited extent even in irrational beings. The whole world is related and therefore the whole world can in its different degrees engage in contemplation. We may conclude then by noting the connection of 'sympathy' with the lower forms of prayer and contemplation, and by observing that this connection will appear of increasing importance when we come to speak of theurgy in the post-Plotinian writers. Furthermore, if contemplation is literally world-wide, here is a metaphysical basis for the new sense of πίστις as a valid sort of cognition derived from sense-data.

To begin to understand this development we shall now turn to a famous section of Porphyry's *Ad Marcellam*. In chapter 23[13] Porphyry explains that those who claim to be honouring the Gods while neglecting virtue and wisdom are in fact denying them and dishonouring them.[14] For without

honouring him rightly[15] irrational πίστις does not find God. Here we should notice at once the distinction between rational and irrational πίστις. The Platonic text on which this is based may be *Timaeus* 37B9, where we read of πίστεις βέβαιοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς, but the emphasis on a distinction between rational and irrational πίστις is the product of Porphyry's own world. We recall how Plotinus castigates those who expect the Gods to intervene on their behalf to get them out of difficulties they have brought upon themselves.[16] We do not know to whom he is referring specifically, and indeed there may be no specific reference. What we can deduce however is that these 'unthinkingly religious persons'[17] may well have included those who appealed to faith, that is, to irrational πίστις.

In this passage and in what follows Porphyry distinguishes between the 'irrational faith', presumably of the Gnostics and the Christians, and another kind of πίστις which he goes on to expound as a fundamental requirement of the philosopher. As the distinction is intended to lead to a justification of 'rational πίστις' and indeed to a new emphasis on πίστις of this kind, we must try to take the matter further. It should be remarked, of course, that the rehabilitated variety of πίστις to be found in Porphyry must not be automatically equated with anything we may later find in Proclus, unless some kind of true continuity can be discovered.

In the opening sections of the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, in a clear reference to Porphyry and his anti-Christian polemic, Eusebius remarks that 'some have supposed that Christianity has no λόγος to support itself but that those who desire the name confirm their opinion by an unreasoning faith and an assent without examination (ἀλόγῳ πίστει καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ συγκαταθέσει); and they assert that no one is able by clear demonstration (δι' ἀποδείξεως ἐναργοῦς) to furnish evidence of the truth'.[18] Here we are shown Porphyry being highly Platonic: πίστις is decried; the ἀνεξετάστῳ συγκαταθέσει puts us in mind of the ἀνεξέταστος βίος of the *Apology*;[19]

πίστις is contrasted with ἀπόδειξις—they are not, as in at least one passage of Plotinus,[20] alternative ways of reaching an end; πίστις is rather inherently irrational. We should notice too that πίστις again occurs in connection with the idea of ἐνάργεια. Here it is ἀπόδειξις that is ἐναργής. Any Epicurean (or other) notions about the ἐνάργειαι which do not derive from demonstration are rejected.

This is what Porphyry thinks of 'irrational πίστις', of such πίστις as that of the Christians. What then does his own variety of πίστις imply? Πίστις in the *Ad Marcellam* is one of the four elements (στοιχεῖα) which are significant for the friend of God. We now know from Lewy that these 'elements' derive from the *Chaldaean Oracles*.[21] Porphyry seems to be the first philosopher to use them in this way. Although, as we have seen in Plotinus, there are some very interestingly un-Platonic overtones to πίστις, no direct influence of the Chaldaean triad can be found at an earlier date. What then of Porphyry? He is tantalizingly brief in the *Ad Marcellam*. He says it is necessary to trust (πιστεῦσαι) that the only salvation (σωτηρία) is conversion to God (ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐπιστροφή) and after trusting that this is possible to be eager to know the truth about him. And that is all. This is indeed what Armstrong calls 'Platonic firm rational confidence'.[22] This πίστις is not the ἀνεξέταστος variety. But it is a way of 'salvation'—the only way—and Porphyry is Plotinian in rejecting religious 'short-cuts'.[23] Porphyry has taken the triad over from the Oracles, but has used it in a remarkably old-fashioned Platonic way. We must now see whether his successors did likewise.

Of the Platonic successors to Porphyry we will consider only three in any detail: Proclus, pseudo-Dionysius and Simplicius. For reasons which will become apparent during the discussion, it will be advisable to take these out of their chronological order and deal with Simplicius first.

There are two passages to be considered, both cited by Lewy.[24] The first and briefer is from the Prooemium to the

Commentary on the Physics.[25] In this discussion of the reasons for the study of physics, Simplicius tells us that this science arouses us to marvel and magnify the maker of the cosmos. This sense of wonder, he continues, is followed by a sense of community with God (ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν συμπάθεια) and by πίστις and hope. All these feelings are firm (ἀσφαλεῖς). We should notice the connection of συμπάθεια with πίστις; we have already seen in Plotinus that connection with contemplation which might afford the metaphysical basis for a new kind of reputable πίστις. We should recall here that 'sympathy' suggests originally quasi-material connections. Lewy incidentally[26] says that this 'sympathy with the divine (*sic*)' in Simplicius is to be equated with *Eros*—which would bring the whole passage nearer to Porphyry and to the original Chaldaean triad of Faith, Truth and *Eros*—though there is no good reason why this need necessarily be accepted.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that πίστις here is in reputable company. We must now turn for further elucidation to the second Simplician passage. This is to be found in the *Commentary on the De Caelo*.[27] *À propos* of *De Caelo* 269b13 there is a long and clearly Neoplatonic discussion of πίστις. Porphyry's views, which we have already observed, should be borne in mind throughout.

Πίστις is twofold, begins Simplicius.[28] One kind is irrational and separate from demonstration (ἀπόδειξις). There are some individuals who have this kind of πίστις in the most strange things. The other kind, however, accompanies demonstration and is naturally associated with the truth about reality. We should notice that the better kind of πίστις is sure or safe (ἀσφαλής), as in the *Commentary on the Physics*, and also that in the next few lines the word συμπάθεια occurs. What is said about 'sympathy' and its relation to πίστις is highly significant. In the case of reasoning about divine things, says Simplicius, the 'sympathy' that arises from πίστις implants not only a firm hold on true knowledge, but also unity with the objects of knowledge. Later he adds that πίστις brings a

firm foundation in the divine beauty and a unity with it. Here 'sympathy' is closely associated with ἕνωσις. Πίστις brings 'sympathy' and this 'sympathy' leads to, or even perhaps is the equivalent of, union with the divine. We can now see why in the passage from the *Commentary on the Physics* Simplicius is able to speak of a συμπάθεια πρὸς τὸν θεόν. If this phrase occurred in Plotinus, it would probably refer only to union with the World Soul, since the notion of 'sympathy' has originally a connection with the material world. Yet the Plotinian notion that in a sense the One is present to all things and that all things have some sort of contemplative power contains the germ of an expanded version of this theory of 'sympathy'. And 'sympathy' with Νοῦς or the One could hardly be too different from union with it. At any rate the advance to this latter position would not be difficult.

How are we to compare this Simplician evidence with what we have seen in Plotinus and Porphyry? The question of the introduction of ἕνωσις is fundamental. It is presumably derived indirectly from the Oracles, as we shall see. Simplicius, however, does not allude to the 'Chaldaean triad' directly, either in a Porphyrian or a Proclan manner. Neither does he offer the respectable variety of πίστις as an *alternative* means of knowledge to ἀπόδειξις, as Plotinus does in at least one passage. Yet he does have the connection with 'sympathy', though the significance of this has been greatly expanded from that of the *Enneads*. We can now therefore draw a coherent picture of Neoplatonic usage from what Simplicius says, though his words are in part an echo of what we have already seen in Plotinus or Porphyry, and in part an elaboration of them. But in order to pull the rather loose threads together and to determine, for example, whether Rosán is right to compare the Neoplatonic πίστις with the views of the Christians, we must turn to the writings of Proclus.

First of all Proclus makes no bones about the fact that he finds his triad of πίστις, Truth and *Eros* in the *Chaldaean Oracles*.[29] On page 62 of Portus' edition of the *Platonic Theology*

the significance of this is brought more clearly to our notice. 'ἡ πρὸς αὐτὸ (the One) συναφὴ καὶ ἕνωσις is called πίστις by the theologians and not only by them... but by Plato in the *Laws*.'[30] The theologians are certainly those Neoplatonic 'philosophers' like Iamblichus who followed the Chaldaean theurgists, and probably also the Chaldaeans themselves.

In his *Commentary on the Alcibiades* Proclus tells us that it is through the Chaldaean triad that we can bind ourselves to God (τῷ θεῷ συνάπτειν).[31] Earlier in the same work he has said that it is by means of πίστις that all can be settled and firmly situated in the Good,[32] and in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* he remarks that 'it is necessary to keep before oneself that triad of πίστις, truth and *eros*, and also hope for the Good, so that one may be alone with God alone' (τῷ θεῷ μόνῳ συνῇ).[33] We see in these passages the strong connection between πίστις and union with the One that we noticed in the remarks of Simplicius about 'sympathy'. We should observe, however, that in these passages of Proclus, although we might expect to find some mention of 'sympathy', the word does not occur. A probable reason for this will appear later.

The most lengthy and detailed account of πίστις in Proclus is to be found on pages 61 to 63 of the *Platonic Theology*. There is no need to translate the whole of this section, or indeed to comment on all the points Proclus makes. What we must do is to consider what new evidence these pages provide. We should like to know more about the relation of πίστις to ἕνωσις. How does this relation arise? And what about 'sympathy'? Why is it not mentioned? And is the discovery of some association of πίστις with knowledge derived from the senses of any relevance here? And what, if any, is the connection with prayer, or salvation, or both?

Proclus begins by asking what it is that will unite us with God, and asserts that it is the πίστις of the Gods which unites them with the One in a manner which transcends knowledge. The mention of πίστις, however, very soon impels him to introduce a number of *caveats*, to describe at length those

kinds of πίστις with which this πίστις is not to be confused. First, this special πίστις is not to be confused with that 'wandering about the objects of sense'.[34] (We have noticed already that a natural interpretation of πίστις is that it is some kind of conviction derived from sense-data.) Secondly Proclus distinguishes his πίστις from any association with the κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι of Stoicism. The Stoics, of course, are materialists, so this objection is really a variant on the last, but it is also possible that to some πίστις might seem to be associated with Stoic language. We recall that in the passage of Porphyry quoted by Eusebius there is a reference to ἄλογος πίστις and ἀνεξέταστος συγκατάθεσις. Συγκατάθεσις at least is a Stoic term, though not exclusively so. We may notice in passing, however, that Proclus has no allusions to Epicureanism.

The third thing from which Proclus wishes to distinguish his πίστις is 'activity in accordance with the intellect'.[35] This πίστις is unitive; it is above the level of νοῦς. It is then to be distinguished both from conviction derived from the senses and from conviction derived from the intellect or from demonstration. The antithesis we observed in Plotinus between πίστις and ἀπόδειξις is present in Proclus, who writes as follows:[36] ὁ γὰρ διαφερόντως αὐτοῖς πιστεύειν ἐν ταῖς περὶ θεῶν πραγματείαις ἀξιῶν, κἂν ἄνευ ἀποδείξεως λέγωσιν κ.τ.λ.... The same power of transcending ἀπόδειξις is held up as a glory to Proclus in chapter twenty-two of Marinus' *Life*.

This special πίστις then is to be carefully distinguished from other inferior varieties. We might also suppose, from what we have said, that the connection with sense-data which we built up in the pre-Proclan usage of the word is irrelevant; and therefore that the connection with 'sympathy' and perhaps with magic and prayer is irrelevant also. But there is a further point to be considered. Proclus points out that the 'theologians' speak of συναφὴ πρὸς τὸν θεόν and ἕνωσις as πίστις. Does this word 'theologians' give us a clue? The 'theologians' are, of course, the theurgists, and on page 63

of the *Platonic Theology* Proclus equates πίστις with ἡ θεουργικὴ δύναμις, 'which is better than all human wisdom'.

Now theurgy depends on a notion of 'sympathy', a view that there is a connection between material and spiritual powers. Plotinus would certainly regard it as a kind of magic, an unwarranted and misguided extension of the power of 'sympathy' beyond the physical world. Proclus holds a different view.[37] Theurgy is a means of employing what Proclus regards as an ontological fact, namely that 'everything is in everything'.[38] This idea is not new in his work, but it is greatly emphasized—to the extent of revolutionizing the whole. Proclus does not formally regard it as an extension of the doctrine of 'sympathy', but it certainly may be considered at least partially in that light. The fact that Proclus realized this has probably some connection with his not mentioning 'sympathy' in *Platonic Theology* 61–3. Yet, as Rosán points out,[39] there are two kinds of theurgy, a higher and a lower, and it is the higher with which we are concerned, for we are expressly told, as we have seen, that πίστις is a 'theurgic power'.

Πίστις is in fact the highest power in man. As Rosán observes,[40] it 'may be defined as a kind of illegitimate belief' (νόθη δόξα) which leads to the One. It is precisely called δόξα because ordinary δόξα cannot grasp the causes of things, and the One, of course, has no cause. But why, we may ask, is such πίστις 'theurgic'? Because like theurgy itself it affects its object. Theurgy itself depends upon the principle of the all in all; thus for the theurgist the manipulation of the small can affect the great. Similarly with this 'higher' theurgy. The fact that πίστις is 'theurgic' betrays its origins: 'sympathy' and conviction from sense-data. Proclus attempts to rule these out in the *Platonic Theology*, but for a thing to be a theurgic power there must be an object to feel the theurgic effect. Plotinus, of course, holds that the One is present in a sense throughout the universe. This does not mean, however, that anything in the universe can 'affect' it. Yet like it or not, this

notion of 'affecting' must be present in the Proclan 'higher theurgy' or πίστις. And the effect is such that πίστις is equated by the 'theologians' with a linking to God and a union with him. Proclus gives the game away and virtually admits that he is still really trying to 'affect' God in chapter two of the *Chaldaean Philosophy* when he says, 'Let us not hope to *persuade* the Ruler of all truth by some invented outpouring of speech, nor by the show of artfully embellished actions... but let the hymn we compose to God be our own assimilation to him'.

Πίστις then in Proclus is not very like Christian faith, for there is no real parallel between the Christian's faith in Christ and the Neoplatonist's reliance on the *Chaldaean Oracles*.[41] Πίστις is not faith in the Oracles, but an attitude derived from the Oracles and harmonized with ideas from Greek philosophy itself that the One can be 'affected' because of its presence in the world. We must then also deny that for Proclus πίστις is a Platonic firm rational confidence. It can be shown that Proclus holds the view that union with the One can be attained through a suprahuman element in man, and that, in contrast to Plotinus, he views the process of ascent in rather mechanical terms.[42] Proclan πίστις is the conviction, which ultimately brings its own fulfilment, that union is possible because of the structure of the material universe. It is at the most generous quasi-magical, and thus akin to an inferior type of prayer condemned by Plotinus. Porphyry took the term πίστις from the *Chaldaean Oracles*, but did not use it in an un-Platonic sense; Proclus, however, with some attempted reservations, allowed it to revert to its origins. He is shown in this at least to be not a philosopher or theologian but a theurgist.

As a brief epilogue to this discussion we may look at a passage of pseudo-Dionysius.[43] Dionysius, as we know, is very Proclan in his thought, but he does not have Proclus' inhibitions about the material world and the material implications of his language. Since he is both Christian and Platonist, he

can afford not to worry about using language which might seem to give offence to the 'anti-sensational' susceptibilities of the Platonists. His language about πίστις is an interesting commentary on Proclus', for he feels no need to suppress the roots of his thought which lie in doctrines of 'sympathy'. After speaking of 'not learning, but experiencing (παθών) divine things',[44] he writes that 'from sympathy with them—if it is right to speak so—a man is perfected to the unteachable and mystic union and faith'. Here we have it. Experience of the divine leads to union and faith. As in Proclus, union and faith are ultimately identical—and the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation frees Dionysius from a charge of imposing mere magic and theurgy upon his philosophical schema. For a Christian the gap between the immaterial and the material which Proclus has to fill by his own theurgical efforts has been filled by God in his Revelation.

18

CONCLUSION

Now that we have investigated a number of aspects of the world of Plotinus, a few very general words are in order. Anyone who has attempted to introduce students to the philosophy of Plotinus will agree that he has undertaken an extremely difficult task. When one is reading the *Enneads*, it becomes clear that it would almost not be too much to say that the whole philosophy of Plotinus can be deduced from every individual sentence, or that a prerequisite for understanding any of the *Enneads* is to have read all of them. For Plotinus introduces the reader into a new and sometimes strange world, knowledge of which seems to be acquired by osmosis. It is a strange world, yet at the same time familiar, for Plotinus, as someone has said, is the most metaphysical of all philosophers, and the most sceptical among us may sometimes wonder whether metaphysics is dead after all.

If then we wish to examine the work of a prince among metaphysicians, it is to Plotinus that we should turn. His philosophy, refusing to be bound by the Greek bonds of the finite, has a peculiar contemporary relevance in an age when the theory of relativity has shaken long-cherished and comfortable views of a mechanistically intelligible universe. He should be read not from the 'world-historical' viewpoint, where he may be seen as a stage in the development of Augustine or pseudo-Dionysius, but for himself. He is not a philologist's philosopher—not, that is, a man whose thought, having no contemporary relevance, can be studied as the object of 'pure science' in an ivory tower where linguistic considerations are paramount. On the contrary, he presents perhaps the most powerful affirmation of one way of thinking about man, his nature and his place in the cosmos.

NOTES

2 A LIFE FOR THE SAGE

1 *V.P.* 3. 2 *V.P.* 2.

3 For discussions of Porphyry's methods of dating see H. Oppermann, *Plotins Leben: Untersuchungen zur Biographie Plotins* (*Orient und Antike* 7, Heidelberg 1929), 29–57, and M. J. Boyd, 'The Chronology in Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*', *CP* 32 (1937), 241–57. Oppermann thinks that Porphyry dates either by Syro-Macedonian regnal years (beginning in the autumn) or by Egyptian regnal years beginning on 29 August. This view, first put forward by Dessau and accepted by F. Heinemann (*Plotin* [Leipzig 1921], 240), may be the right one, though powerful opposition has been raised by Boyd who holds that Porphyry dates by the *dies imperii* of the various emperors. A third but unlikely possibility is the tribunician years beginning on 10 December. Inevitably the differences made by these chronological variants are slight and have no bearing on the possible philosophical significance of activities in Plotinus' life. It will not therefore be necessary to dispute whether Plotinus, who seems to have been born in 205, was actually born in 204.

4 H. Oppermann, *op. cit.* 55; Boyd, *op. cit.* 242.

5 *V.P* 3. 6 *V.P.* 1.

7 Eunapius, *V. Soph.* 6 (Boissonade).

8 For further ancient references to Plotinus of Lycopolis see P. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident* (Louvain 1934), 245–6. For discussion of the names Lyco and Lycopolis (as well as for reference to a second Lycopolis in the Delta area), see F. Zucker, 'Plotin und Lykopolis', *Sitz. der Deutschen Akad. der Wiss. zu Berlin, Kl. für Sprachen, Lit. und Kunst* (1950), 4–7. It is a problem where Eunapius found his information on Lyco. Was it common knowledge? Did this common knowledge stem from Eustochius?

9 *Enn.* 5.8.6.

10 H. R. Schwyzer, 'Plotin', *RE* 21, col. 477.

11 Cf. Diogenes Laertius' account of the activities of Zeno (D.L. 7.2).

12 Cf. E. R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 3–61. Not even Proclus mentions Ammonius!

13 *V.P.* 3.

14 See the chapter entitled 'The Originality of Plotinus' below, pp. 169–87.

15 For Plotinus on the expedition of Gordian see R. Harder, 'Zur Biographie Plotins', *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1960), 277–82.

16 For the origins of third-century senators see G. Barbieri, *L'Albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino* (Rome 1952), 432–73.

17 *V.P.* 7. For these personages see G. Barbieri *op. cit.* Marcellus

Orontius may be, with Barbieri, correctly named Arruntius (Barbieri, 252). Castricius Firmus was clearly a more intimate associate than the others. It is remotely possible that he is to be identified with the Firmus who was *dux limitis Africani* under Aurelian (Barbieri, 275, no. 1565). He appears to have written a commentary on the *Parmenides* (Phot. *Biblioth.* 242) and perhaps a life of Homer. For this see J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre* (Ghent 1913), 98–9.

18 *V.P.* 3.

19 The views of Alföldi on the hellenizing policies of Gallienus and their relevance for Plotinus are not based on ancient evidence. Cf. A. Alföldi, *Die Vorherrschaft der Pannonier im Römerreiche und die Reaktion des Hellenentums unter Gallienus, 25 Jahre Römisch-Germanische Kommission* (1930), 11–51. Also *CAH* 12 (1939), 188 and earlier M. Wundt, *Plotin* (Leipzig 1919), 36ff.

20 *V.P.* 9.

21 *V.P.* 7.

22 *V.P.* 2.

23 *V.P.* 1.

24 *V.P.* 14.

25 *V.P.* 3.

26 *V.P.* 3.

27 *V.P.* 13.

28 *V.P.* 4.

29 *V.P.* 6 and 11.

30 *V.P.* 6.

31 *V.P.* 4.

32 *V.P.* 8.

33 *V.P.* 13.

34 Cf. *V.P.* 14 2.

35 *V.P.* 18.

36 *V.P.* 23.

37 *V.P.* 13.

38 *V.P.* 18.

39 *V.P.* 15 and 20.

40 Cf. *V.P.* 16 and 18.

41 See the chapter below on the 'Originality of Plotinus', pp. 169–87.

42 *V.P.* 15.

43 *V.P.* 2.

44 *V.P.* 15.

45 Cf. J. M. Rist. *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 171–2; *V.P.* 12.

46 The Greek word λεγομένην is probably significant. It seems to preclude the identification of the ruins with any home of the Pythagoreans or other well-known thinkers.

47 Cf. R. Harder, 'Zur Biographie Plotins', *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1960), 287.

48 For the technical meaning of this word, and the origin of the English word 'anchorite', cf. A.-J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley 1960), 54–67. For the inhabitants of Platonopolis, cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 172.

49 *V.P.* 16.

50 2.9.10; cf. *V.P.* 16 and 2.9.6 for reference to Gnostic attacks on Plato.

51 Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 185; *V.P.* 15.

52 *V.P.* 1.

53 Cf. R. Harder, 'Zur Biographie Plotins', *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1960), 286–92.

54 For ancient views on the *daimonion* see J. M. Rist, 'Plotinus and the *Daimonion* of Socrates', *Phoenix* 17 (1963), 13–24.

55 *V.P.* 10.
56 For its interpretation cf. A. H. Armstrong, 'Was Plotinus a Magician?', *Phronesis* 1 (1955–6), 77–8.
57 *V.P.* 15.
58 For the following see Harder, 'Zur Biographie Plotins', 288–92.
59 Harder, *op. cit.* 291.
60 Perhaps it should be noticed here that despite P. Merlan ('Plotinus and Magic', *Isis* 44 [1953], 341–8) and others Plotinus did *not* practice magic in the form of theurgy or in any other form. For this see Armstrong, 'Was Plotinus a Magician?', *Phronesis* 1 (1955–6) and E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951), 286–9.
61 *V.P.* 11.
62 *V.P.* 2.
63 It is the opinion of Oppermann, *op. cit.* 7–28, that Firmicus' account (*Math.* 1.7), which differs in its details, derives directly from Eustochius and not through the mediation of Porphyry. Against this thesis and in favour of the view that Firmicus simply 'wrote up' Porphyry for a popular audience, see P. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident* (Louvain 1934), 25–43. Henry's arguments are powerful and probably valid, but just a slight doubt remains.
64 P. Gillet, *Plotin au point de vue médical et psychologique* (thesis, Paris 1934).
65 P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la Simplicité du regard* (Paris 1963), 143.
66 *V.P.* 22.32.

3 THE PLOTINIAN ONE

1 Cf. *Parm.* 132 BC.
2 Cf. πρᾶγμα, *Prot.* 330 C.
3 Cf. A. L. Peck, 'Plato and the μέγιστα γένη of the *Sophist*', *CQ*, n.s. 2 (1952), 32–56 and J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 44–6.
4 *Rep.* 484 D 6, cf. 493 E 2. 5 *Phaedo* 78 D.
6 *Being and Some Philosophers*[2] (Toronto 1952), 10. Further references to Gilson will be to this work.
7 Gilson, *op. cit.* 16.
8 *Phaedo* 100 C.
9 *De Gen. et Corr.* 335 b 7 ff.
10 *Phil.* 64 D.
11 Cf. *Met.* 1091 b 13 ff., Aristoxenus, *Harm. Elem.* 2.30; J. M. Rist, 'The *Parmenides* Again', *Phoenix* 16 (1962), 13–14.
12 L. Sweeney, 'Infinity in Plotinus', *Gregorianum* 38 (1957), 516, n. 3. J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto 1951), 306, n. 19.
13 Gilson, *op. cit.* 22.
14 Cf. A. H. Armstrong, 'Plotinus' Doctrine of the Infinite and its Significance for Christian Thought', *Downside Review* 73 (1955),

47–58; L. Sweeney (who in these original papers denied the One's intrinsic infinity), 'Infinity in Plotinus', *Gregorianum* 38 (1957), 515–35, 713–32; W. N. Clarke, 'The Limitation of Act by Potency', *The New Scholasticism* 26 (1952), 184–9, and 'Infinity in Plotinus: A Reply', *Gregorianum* 40 (1959), 75–98; L. Sweeney, 'Plotinus Revisited', *Gregorianum* 40 (1959), 327–31, and 'Another Interpretation of *Ennead* 6.7.32', *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1960–1), 289–303, especially p. 302, n. 34, where he now admits, contrary to his earlier position, that the One is intrinsically infinite.

15 Cf. *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 80, with the references there given.

16 See my discussion of this passage in 'Plotinus on Matter and Evil', *Phronesis* 6 (1961), 158, where I have rejected a different interpretation offered by E. Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*[2] (trans. from the French by J. Thomas) (Chicago 1958), 180, and pp. 118–19 below.

17 See R. Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la Philosophie de Plotin* (Paris 1921), 162–81, and *Eros and Psyche*, 80–1.

18 W. N. Clarke, 'Infinity in Plotinus: A Reply', *Gregorianum* 40 (1959), 83 in answer to the suggestions of Sweeney in *Gregorianum* 38 (1957), 515–35, 713–32.

19 L. Sweeney, 'Plotinus Revisited', *Gregorianum* 40 (1959), 329.

20 Sweeney's attempt to evade the significance of this text (*Gregorianum* 38 [1957], 723, n. 100) is unsatisfactory. He fails to see that the oneness of the One can only mean its infinity. It can only be clear of the internal divisions of which Sweeney speaks by being absolutely free of every kind of finitude. If the One is finite, it cannot be absolute simple.

21 Cf. Sweeney, 'Infinity in Plotinus', *Gregorianum* 38 (1957), 531–5; A. H. Armstrong, 'Plotinus' Doctrine of the Infinite and its Significance for Christian Thought', *Downside Review* 73 (1955), 53.

22 Edited by E. R. Dodds (Oxford[2] 1963).

23 E. R. Dodds, *ibid.* 247; A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus* (London 1953), 34.

24 Cf. L. J. Rosán, *The Philosophy of Proclus* (N.Y. 1949), 102.

25 L. Sweeney, 'Another Interpretation of *Ennead* 6.7.32', *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1961), 302.

26 See the chapter on Beauty, the Beautiful, and the Good below, pp. 53–65.

27 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Theos and the One in Some Texts of Plotinus', *Mediaeval Studies* 24 (1962), 169–80.

28 Cf. A. H. Armstrong, 'Plotinus' Doctrine of the Infinite and its Significance for Christian Thought', *Downside Review* 73 (1955), 57.

29 For the text, cf. W. Kroll, 'Ein neuplatonischer Parmenidescommentar in einem Turiner Palimpsest', *Rh. Mus.* n.f. 47 (1892), 599–627. For the possibility that Porphyry was the author see P. Hadot, 'Fragments d'un Commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide', *REG* 74 (1961), 410–38.

30 Anon. comm. IV, 19–22 (Kroll, *ibid.* 606).
31 *Ibid.* XII, 22–7 (Kroll, 616).
32 Damascius, *Dubit. et solut.* 43, vol. I, p. 86.9 Ruelle. For the significance of this in Porphyry's development see P. Hadot, *op. cit.* 423, and J. M. Rist, 'Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism', *Hermes* 92 (1964), 220–5.
33 Ch. 26 Mommert.
34 *Ad Candidum* 3 7. All references to Victorinus are to the text of P. Hadot and P. Henry (Sources Chrétiennes 68).
35 *Ad Cand.* 4.11. Cf. *Adv. Arium* 4.19.4. 36 *Adv. Arium* 4.19.5–6.
37 The word *exsistentia* is ambiguous in Victorinus. Sometimes it means ὕπαρξις, τὸ εἶναι μόνον, and is thus specifically distinguished from *substantia* (οὐσία), as for example *Adv. Arium* 1.30.20 (cf. Candidus' letter to Victorinus, 1.2.19). At other times however *exsistentia* is the equivalent of *substantia*/οὐσία, and to reach the sense of ὕπαρξις Victorinus uses *praeexsistentia* (*Adv. Arium* 4.19.12, 1.50.2). See further Hadot's note on the last-mentioned passage.
38 *Ad Candidum* 4.
39 *Ap.* Damascium, *Dubit. et solut.* 43, vol. I, p. 86.
40 Cf. O. Bardenhewer, *Die pseudo-aristotelische Schrift über das reine Gute bekannt unter dem Namen 'Liber de Causis'* (Freiburg 1882), 186.

4 THE ONE'S KNOWLEDGE

1 As most recently A. H. Armstrong has pointed out ('The Background of the Doctrine that the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellect', *Entretiens Hardt* 5, *Les Sources de Plotin* [Geneva 1960], 406–8).
2 'God sees all things not in themselves but in himself, in so far as he contains in his essence the likeness of all other things that come from him.' (See W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* 2[3] [London 1929], 115).
3 3.8.10.1; 5.3.15.32; 5.4.2.38.
4 For further information and discussion of this topic see H.-R. Schwyzer, '"Bewusst" und "Unbewusst" bei Plotin', *Les Sources de Plotin* (Geneva 1960), 343–90.
5 E. R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', *Les Sources de Plotin* (Geneva 1960), 19–20.
6 Cf. fragment 24 in the collection of Numenian texts made by E. A. Leemans, *Mém. d'Acad. Roy. de Belgique, Classe des Lettres* 37, 2 (1937).
7 For the problem of the fact that sometimes the One, sometimes the Forms, are the νοητά (or νοητόν) of the Second Hypostasis, see J. M. Rist, 'The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 12 (1962), 103.
8 Cf. 6.8.18.15–16, also, in a simile, of the One. Bréhier also wrongly makes νοῦς the subject of δύναται. He is right however about the subject of ἔχει. See below.

9 P. Henry, *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 387.
10 H.-R. Schwyzer, *ibid.* 389.
11 Cilento's translation, vol. 3, 1 (Bari 1949), also makes τὸ ἕν the subject. His rendering, 'L'Uno ha già—quasi avvertenza intima del suo potere (del fatto cioè che puó)—una sua realtà', is, however, hardly a literal translation of the Greek.
12 For the duality of νοῦς and αἴσθησις cf. 5.1.7.6–7.
13 Evidence on ἐπιβολή is to be found in D.L. 10, chapters 31, 35, 38, 50, 51, 147 and in Lucretius 2.740, 1047, 1080. Cf. also Clem. Alex. *Stromateis* 2.4 (fr. 255 Usener) and C. Bailey's *Epicurus* (Oxford 1926), 259–74.
14 G. Vlastos, in his review of F. M. Cornford's *Principium Sapientiae* in *Gnomon* 27 (1955), 70–1.
15 C. Bailey, *op. cit.* 260–6.
16 But cf. προσβαλεῖς...ἀθρόως in 5.5.10.7 of the move to union.

5 BEAUTY, THE BEAUTIFUL, AND THE GOOD

1 W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* 2³ (London 1929), 124.
2 In this section the term τὸ καλόν is used of the Form exclusively. Τὸ κάλλος which occurs twice in line 22 refers specifically and only to 'the beauty of the sensible world'.
3 W. R. Inge, *op. cit.* 123.
4 The phrase ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν ἑμαυτὸν ἱδρύσας is shown to mean 'placing myself above the whole intelligible world' by the Arabic version which must have this meaning. Cf. Henry–Schwyzer 2, 225. I am grateful to Dr M. E. Marmura for rechecking the Arabic. The passage then refers not to an ascent to νοῦς but to the One. See below, pp. 195–6.
5 *Ap.* Euseb. *P.E.* 9.21, 543b 14. It is used by Plotinus of νοῦς at 3.8.11.30, 5.8.12.7, 6.7.21.6, and of the world of sense at 4.3.17.21. Cf. E. R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 18.
6 For the idea in later Neoplatonism that the ἄνθος of something, e.g. of mind, is in fact higher ontologically than that of which it is an ἄνθος, cf. J. M. Rist, 'Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism', *Hermes* 92 (1964), 215–17.
7 A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge 1940), 26–7.
8 Cf. *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 59.
9 Cf. A. L. Peck, 'Plato Versus Parmenides', *PR* 71 (1962), 159–84.
10 On Plotinus' alleged pantheism see R. Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin* (Paris 1921), 182ff., 283ff. and my *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 80–1.
11 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Plotinus on Matter and Evil', *Phronesis* 6 (1961), 157–66.
12 Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 187.

6 EMANATION AND NECESSITY

1 P. Henry, 'La liberté chez Plotin', *Rev. Néosc. de Phil.* 33 (1931), 339.
2 J. Trouillard, *La Procession plotinienne* (Paris 1955), 60. Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964).
3 Cf. *Eros and Psyche* and A. H. Armstrong, 'Platonic *Eros* and Christian *Agape*', *DR* (1961), 105–21.
4 A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus: A volume of selections* (London 1953), 33.
5 A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge 1940), 111.
6 Cf. above on the knowledge of the One, pp. 38–52.
7 R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge 1955), 149–50.
8 Cf. 5.4.2.38; 5.3.15.32.
9 A. H. Armstrong, *Architecture* (note 5 above), 62–3. The problem is recognized by Trouillard, *op. cit.* 3.
10 μέχρι τοῦ δυνατοῦ, cf. 6.7.8; 5.1.7; 5.4.1; 1.8.7.
11 P. Henry, 'La liberté', 318–39; J. Trouillard, *op. cit.*
12 P. Henry, *ibid.* 339.
13 J. Trouillard, *op. cit.* 77, 79.
14 P. Henry, 'La liberté', *passim.*
15 J. Trouillard, *op. cit.* 77.

7 LOGOS

1 Heraclitus, fr. 50 (DK).
2 E.g. A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible World in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge 1940), 107; E. Bréhier, *Notice* to *Enn.* 3.2–3 in the Budé edition.
3 Cf. Porphyry, *V.P.* 14.
4 6.7.17.41 ff.
5 Cf. W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 1^3 (London 1929), 254–64 and J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 176–7.
6 For this part see 2.9.2; 4.8.8; 5.1.10; 4.3.12. In 2.9.2 there is mention of an intermediate part between the upper soul and that concerned with sense. This is either an echo of Plato's doctrine of the tripartition of the soul, and thus τὸ θυμοειδές, or, as Armstrong has suggested (*Gnomon* 36 (1960), 319–20), the discursive rather than the intuitive part. Plato himself seems to have been in doubt as to how the fundamental divison of the soul into νοῦς and the rest should be equated with tripartition. The result seems to have been that the 'middle part' (θυμοειδές) tended to be merged with the ἐπιθυμητικόν (as in Plotinus). Cf. D. A. Rees, 'Bipartition of the Soul in the Early Academy', *JHS* 57 (1957), 112–18 and Aristotle, *N.E.* 1102a 23 ff. Himmerich's view that the upper part of the soul can be affected by ignorance (*Eudaimonia: Die Lehre des Plotins von der*

Selbstverwirklichung des Menschen [Würzburg 1959], 126) is successfully rebutted by Armstrong.

7 Those to whom the Plotinian terms *logos, logoi* suggest Stoicism would be correct in their estimate in so far as both the Plotinian and the Stoic *logoi* (*logos*) are among other things the organizing principles of the material world.

8 3.4.3.22.

9 For a general account of this see J. M. Rist, 'Forms of Individuals in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 13 (1963), 223–31. Recently H. J. Blumenthal has argued again that Plotinus is undecided about Forms of Individuals ('Did Plotinus believe in Ideas of Individuals?', *Phronesis* 11 (1966), 61–80). His strongest argument (pp. 62, 70) is that Plotinus goes back on his positive statements about such Ideas in 5.7 in the later treatise 6.5.8. But Plotinus need not be taken as saying anything in 6.5 which would entail his denying the existence of Forms of *individual men* as argued in 5.7.

10 H. F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* 1 (Baltimore 1944), 508.

11 Cf. 6.4.16.

12 See the discussion which followed P. Henry's paper 'Une Comparaison chez Aristote, Alexandre et Plotin', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 448. Theiler refers to Aristotle, *N.E.* 1166a 17, 1168b 35, 1178a 2ff. and *Met.* 1037a 7, 1043a 34. For a comparison with Plotinus' 'Each of us is an Intelligible World', the wording of *N.E.* 1166a 17 seems particularly relevant: τοῦ γὰρ διανοητικοῦ χάριν, ὅπερ ἕκαστος εἶναι δοκεῖ.

13 A. H. Armstrong, *Architecture*, 102. Bréhier (*Notice*) says that Plotinus is manifestly embarrassed by the relation of *logos* to the three hypostases.

14 Cf. Bréhier's introduction to them in the Budé edition and R. E. Witt, 'The Plotinian Logos and its Stoic Basis', *CQ* 25 (1931), 103–11.

15 A. H. Armstrong, *Architecture*, 104–5.

16 Cf. Armstrong's earlier discussion, especially pp. 96–7. The problem of the correctness of Armstrong's distinctions and of his general account of nature will be discussed below.

17 I do not understand this sentence. If its meaning is what it seems to be, it gives away the whole of Armstrong's position.

18 A. H. Armstrong, *Architecture*, 86.

19 A. H. Armstrong, *ibid.* 104.

20 2.3.13.4; 2.3.16.5.

21 Yet φύσις or cognate words do occur in these treatises, at 3.2.7.41; 3.2.10.5; 3.2.11.1.

22 For the use of γένος to denote a section of the tripartite soul, cf. *Tim.* 69c.

23 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 12 (1962), 101.

24 A. H. Armstrong, *Architecture*, 107.

25 *Quis rerum...?* 205; *De Somn.* 2.228. (The references are Armstrong's.)

26 *De op. mundi* 20.

27 Cf. J. Leisegang's index to Philo (Berlin 1902), *s.v.* λόγος 1.12. For the Stoics cf. M. Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der Griechischen Philosophie* (Oldenbourg 1872), 140–1 and A. Aall, *Geschichte der Logosidee in der Griechischen Philosophie* (Leipzig 1896), 140.

28 E.g. at *De Moise* 2.127. Cf. Aall, *Geschichte*, 198.

29 Cf. Leisegang's index (note 27).

30 Cf. M. Heinze, *Lehre*, 317 and Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* 3.2–3.

31 We should notice that there seems to be no connection whatsoever in *Plotinus'* thought between these two *logoi* and the two aspects of *logos* he discusses in 3.3.4—a passage we examined above. Nor are the λόγος ποιητικός and λόγος συνημμένος ἐκείνῳ of that passage equivalent to the double *logos* (reflective and outgoing) of Philo's God, despite E. Bréhier, *Les Idées philosophiques de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris 1908), 110 and *Notice* (p. 21) to *Enn.* 3.2–3 in the Budé edition. I fail to see how Plotinus' λόγος ποιητικός can be equated with Philo's *logos*, 'celui du monde intelligible tourné vers Dieu' (*Idées phil.* 110, n. 3). Indeed Bréhier's own cross-reference is contradictory. In his *Notice* (p. 21) he speaks of 'un logos "d'en haut" qui est créateur, et un logos issu de celui d'en haut qui forme le lien entre l'intelligible et le sensible'. He says this is frequent in Philo and compares his *Idées phil.* 110. There, however, he talks of 'un double logos, celui du monde intelligible tourné vers Dieu et celui qui descend au-devant de l'homme dans la région des sensibles'. The fact is that Bréhier's language in the *Notice* is somewhere near being appropriate to Plotinus (but not to Philo) while in his *Idées philosophiques* he is describing Philo well enough (but saying nothing of Plotinus).

32 M. Heinze, *Lehre*, 140–5; A. Aall, *Geschichte*, 140.

33 Cf. E. Goodenough, *Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (Oxford 1962), 96: 'There is not a single pagan author who is remotely to be suspected of ever having read Philo.' This is perhaps a little too strong. P. Merlan recently concluded a study of the possible relations between Plotinus and Judaism ('Plotinus and the Jews', *JHP* 2 [1964], 21) with the words: 'Contrary to what we could expect there is no proof that Plotinus had any significant contacts with Jews.'

8 THE SENSIBLE OBJECT

1 W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* 2[3] (London 1929), 58.

2 Cf. K. Praechter, 'Nikostratos der Platoniker', *Hermes* 57 (1922), 481–517, and A. C. Lloyd, 'Neoplatonic Logic and Aristotelian Logic', *Phronesis* 1 (1955–6), 58–72, 146–60.

3 E.g. C. Rutten, *Les Catégories du monde sensible dans les Ennéades de*

Plotin (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Phil. et Lettres de l'Univ. de Liége), fasc. 160 (Paris 1961).

4 D. W. Hamlyn, 'The Communion of Forms and the Development of Plato's Logic', *PQ* 5 (1955), 294–5.

5 *Phil.* 14Aff., 16Cff.

6 J. M. E. Moravcsik, 'Συμπλοκὴ Εἰδῶν and the Genesis of Λόγος', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 42 (1960), 120. Hamlyn's position is espoused by R. S. Bluck, 'False Statement in the *Sophist*', *JHS* 77 (1957), 11, 182.

7 On the importance of this distinction in Plato see J. M. Rist, 'The Immanence and Transcendence of the Platonic Form', *Philologus* 108 (1964), 217–32.

8 E.g. *Phil.* 61DE.

9 *Pace* Lloyd, *op. cit.* 159.

10 Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 7.276–7; Albinus, *Didask.* 4.7–8 (Louis). These references are to be found in Lloyd, *op. cit.* 158–9.

11 E. Bréhier, *Ennéades* 6^1, p. 48 (*notice* to 6.1–3). Cf. Rutten, *op. cit.* 57.

12 *Enn.* 2.7.

13 The Greek word is πάθη, but 'accidents' seems to convey the sense better than anything else.

14 See J. M. Rist, 'Forms of Individuals in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 13 (1963), 223–31.

15 *Isag.* 7.22 Busse.

9 THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL

1 Plotinus' terminology is confusing here, for he uses the phrase 'declines to the other world' (νεύει ἐκεῖ), where upward motion is clearly meant, and we must in English say 'incline'. For similar uses of νεῦσις to indicate motion cf. 1.8.4.25, 6.9.9.11.

2 For this view cf. 2.9.11.21 and J. Zandee, *The Terminology of Plotinus and of some Gnostic Writings, mainly the 4th treatise of the Jung Codex* (Istanbul 1961), 28.

3 For a discussion of how Plotinus abandoned the Neopythagorean view that the term τόλμα could be applied pejoratively to the world of Forms (despite 6.9.5.29, and, by implication, 3.8.8.32ff.), see J. M. Rist, 'Monism: Plotinus and some Predecessors', *HSCP* 70 (1965), 340–3. It is true that at 3.7.11.15ff. Plotinus ascribes to the World Soul the desire to rule itself and to be its own master (ἄρχειν αὐτῆς βουλομένη καὶ εἶναι αὐτῆς) and that this is comparable to the τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι of individual souls in 5.1.1, but the *context* of the two passages is different. In 5.1.1 Plotinus is speaking of the origin of sin—which for individual souls co-exists with free-will; in 3.7.11 (where the word τόλμα does not occur) he is dealing with the purely cosmological activity of the World Soul to which no sinfulness need be attached *per se*. E. R. Dodds suggests (*Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge 1965), 24–6) that Plotinus'

thought on τόλμα shows a considerable development. I argue against this view in a review of Dodds to be published in *Phoenix* 20 (1966).

4 4.8.6.18 ff.

5 E. Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*[2] (trans. J. Thomas) (Chicago 1958), 180.

6 H. C. Puech thinks that before his break with the Gnostics Plotinus imagined matter to be an evil substance. Cf. his 'Plotin et les Gnostiques', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 184.

7 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Plotinus on Matter and Evil', *Phronesis* 6 (1961), 157–8.

8 I have repeated my argument from *Phronesis* at greater length here because Bréhier's interpretation still seems to be widely accepted.

9 Cf. 6.4.16.

10 For ῥοπή see H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo 1956), 295, n. 136.

11 Cf. 5.3.11; 2.4.5, etc., and J. M. Rist, 'The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 12 (1962), 101–2.

12 Cf. O. Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin 1922), fr. 209.

13 Cf. 6.4.16.

14 J. M. Rist, 'Plotinus on Matter and Evil', *Phronesis* 6 (1961), 154–66.

15 Cf. the interesting paper of F. P. Hager, 'Die Materie und das Böse im antiken Platonismus', *Mus. Helv.* 19 (1962), 73–103. Hager's thesis is that Plotinus' interpretation of the Platonic theory of matter and evil is fundamentally correct and that the criticisms brought against it by Proclus are inadequate. Yet although Proclus' arguments are weak (Hager, 94–5), their very existence helps to emphasize the difficulty in the Plotinian position. Yet so far as I know none of the ancients explicitly identified the root of the problem as the difference between the human soul and the World Soul.

10 MAN'S FREE WILL

1 Mary T. Clark, *Augustine: Philosopher of Freedom* (N.Y. 1958), 26.

2 P. Henry, 'La liberté chez Plotin', *Rev. Néosc. de Phil.* 8 (1931), 50–79, 180–215, 318–39. Henry's work replaces the earlier studies of T. Gollwitzer, *Plotins Lehre von der Willensfreiheit* (Kempten 1900 and Kaiserslautern 1902) and H. F. Müller, 'Plotinos über Notwendigkeit und Freiheit', *Neue Jahrbücher für das Klassische Altertum* 33 (1914), 462–88. Part of the problem has been treated by G. H. Clark, 'Plotinus' Theory of Empirical Responsibility', *New Scholasticism* 17 (1943), 16–31. Clark does not however make use of the work of Henry and much of what he says must be corrected in the light of Henry's conclusions.

3 G. H. Clark, *op. cit.* 16.

4 Cf. P. Henry, *op. cit.* 195: 'Plotin répugne visiblement à reconnaître dans la πρᾶξις une vraie et entière liberté.' Clark (*op. cit.*) and T.

Whittaker, *The Neoplatonists*[2] (Cambridge 1928), 76 think that at this level Plotinus is a determinist. W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 2[3] (London 1929), 185 disagrees and is firmly supported (with evidence) by Henry (*op. cit.* 210).

5 G. H. Clark, *op. cit.* 20.
6 Cf. 3.1.7.15.
7 W. R. Inge, *op. cit.* 185.
8 G. H. Clark, *op. cit.* 22.
9 Cf. *Enn.* 1.2.
10 M. T. Clark, *op. cit.* 136.
11 For a detailed discussion of this see J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 190–1 and elsewhere.
12 Cf. 2.9.2; 4.3.12; 4.8.8; 5.1.10, etc.
13 Cf. 1.1.12.12ff.

11 HAPPINESS

1 E.g. *Rep.* 580E, διὰ σφοδρότητα τῶν τε περὶ τὴν ἐδωδὴν ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ πόσιν καὶ ἀφροδίσια κ.τ.λ.
2 *Athen.* 12.546E.
3 *Athen.* 7.280A.
4 *Tim.* 90C.
5 The doctrine is Stoic, as Henry and Schwyzer indicate.
6 Cf. τῷ ἄγαν ζῶντι, 1.4.3.26.
7 For the whole topic of Being and Life in Plotinus, see the important article of P. Hadot, 'Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin', *Les Sources de Plotin* (Geneva 1960), 107–37.
8 *N.E.* 1101aff.
9 *Ibid.* 1123a34ff.
10 *Ibid.* 1177b34.
11 For the rôle of the will in the formation of the happy man, see below at *Enn.* 1.4.6.14 and 1.4.11.11ff.
12 1.4.15.
13 For the problem of the 'selfishness' of the philosopher, see the next chapter.
14 For a discussion of Plotinus' words for consciousness, see H.-R. Schwyzer, 'Bewusst und Unbewusst bei Plotin', *Les Sources de Plotin* (Geneva 1960), 343–90.
15 *De Anima* 412aff.
16 For further examples cf. 1.4.10.21ff.
17 1.4.4.18.
18 Pleasure and pain are κινήσεις in *Rep.* 583E9, and pleasure, according to the κομψοί, is a γένεσις at *Philebus* 53C5. Plotinus' language in 1.4.12 may be, as Dr Blumenthal has suggested to me, consciously Epicurean. If so, we should compare other Epicurean usages in Plotinus. See above, pp. 50–1 and below, p. 236.
19 *N.E.* 1152b13ff., 1174a29ff.

20 The *locus classicus* for time and eternity in Plotinus is, of course, *Enn.* 3.7.

21 We have already noticed the identification motif in 1.4.4. It recurs at 1.4.16.12. I have discussed the matter at length in *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 89, 94.

12 THE SELF AND OTHERS

1 W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* 2[3] (London 1929), 174. The passage is worth quoting at length, since it is a powerful expression of a general attitude to ancient ethics: 'Greek and Roman ethics always seem to us moderns a little *hard*. Greek civilization was singularly pitiless; the lot of the aged and the unfortunate was acknowledged to be cruel, but this knowledge raised no qualms of conscience. . . The contrast between the Christian ideal of emancipation from self by perfect sympathy, and the Stoical ideal of emancipation by perfect inner detachment, is very significant. It is perhaps for this reason that the later Platonism could do so little to regenerate society. The philosopher saved himself; his country he could not save.' How far this comment indicates an awareness of the *attitude* of the ancient thinkers will become apparent from what follows.

2 *Theaet.* 176B. Cf. *Rep.* 613B, *Tim.* 90A, *Laws* 716BC and Aristotle, *N.E.* 1177b32ff. For Plotinus, see *Enneads*, *passim*, especially 1.2 (on Virtue). For further discussion of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ see my *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964).

3 The best accounts are probably J. Trouillard's *La Purification plotinienne* (Paris 1955) and R. Arnou's *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin* (Paris 1921).

4 *Enn.* 2.9.2; 4.3.12; 4.8.8; 5.1.10.

5 A. H. Armstrong has noticed ('Platonic *Eros* and Christian *Agape*', *DR* [1961], 112) that, in the passage of the *Phaedrus* which lies behind Plotinus here, Plato talks of working on *someone else* to make him better.

6 W. R. Inge, *op. cit.* 172.

7 4.3.32.

8 Already in Plato we find the idea that the good man will be less affected by the deaths of members of his family (*Rep.* 387E, 603E).

9 *V.P.* 8.

10 Cf. Bréhier's *Notice* to *Enneads* 3.2 and 3.3 in the Budé edition.

11 4.3.16.

12 3.2.8.

13 Cf. the obvious desire of Aristotle in the third book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to make each man accountable for almost every act he performs.

14 Cf. 6.8.5. For discussion of the subordination of action to contemplation in the ideal life, see my *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 169–74.

15 *N.E.* 1177a30ff., 1178a29ff.
16 For the importance of being recognized to be virtuous, cf. the description of the respect that is the due of the great-souled man (*N.E.* 1123b10ff.).
17 See for example 6.9.8.4 ff.
18 Cf. 6.8.15.1 and *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 78–84.
19 *V.P.* 14. 20 *Ibid.* 9.
21 Cf. *Enn.* 2.9; 3.2.3, etc.
22 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Plotinus on Matter and Evil', *Phronesis* 6 (1961), 154–66; *Enn.* 5.1.1; 6.9.9, etc.
23 See the chapter on *Logos* above, pp. 84–102.
24 Cf. *Eros and Psyche, passim.*

13 THE ORIGINALITY OF PLOTINUS

1 *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960).
2 *The Enneads*[3], trans. by S. MacKenna, revised by B. S. Page (London 1962), xxxvii–lxiv.
3 R. Harder, 'Quelle oder Tradition', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 327–32.
4 See however P. Merlan's interesting though extraordinarily difficult work, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness: Problems of the Soul in the Neoaristotelian and Neoplatonic Tradition* (The Hague 1963).
5 *V.P.* 14 and 20.
6 This was observed by H.-R. Schwyzer, *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 88.
7 A. H. Armstrong, 'The Background of the Doctrine that the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellect', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 394.
8 Cf. 3.7.10.11 for a distinction between a history of ideas and a philosophical enquiry.
9 Cf. 3.9.1.15 (and Numenius, F24 Leemans), the thirteenth in the chronological list of the *Enneads*, with 2.9.16.17 (number 33 chronologically).
10 *In Tim.* 3.323.5 Diels. Cf. 3.333.29, where Plotinus and 'the great Theodorus' (of Asine) are mentioned as holding the novel position.
11 Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 219–20.
12 A. H. Armstrong, 'Platonic *Eros* and Christian *Agape*', *DR* (1961), 115.
13 W. Theiler, 'Plotin zwischen Plato und Stoa', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 66 and *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin 1930), *passim.*
14 P. Henry, Introduction to *The Enneads*[3], trans. S. MacKenna (London 1962), xlvii.
15 D.L. 7.28 and 176.
16 W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* 2[3] (London 1929), 173. Cf. 1.4.7.31–2.

17 Cf. 2.9.8.43; 1.4.7.44–5 and perhaps 2.9.9.17.

18 The text from Elias' *Prolegomena Philosophiae* (*CAG* 18[1]) 6, 15, 23–16, 2 Busse is reprinted by Henry–Schwyzer immediately after *Enn.* 1.9 in their *editiones major* and *minor*. References dealing with the discussion on the origins of the passage are also to be found there. It is curious that in the *editio minor* the editors no longer mention Henry's view (in 'Vers la reconstitution de l'enseignement oral de Plotin', *Acad. Roy. de Belg., Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres* 23 [1937], 337) that the Elias fragment is from a non-Porphyrian recension of Plotinus. L. G. Westerink, in 'Elias und Plotin', *BZ* 57 (1964), 26–32, has recently shown that Elias' text can be paralleled in various other late Neoplatonic works and that the material it contains derives immediately from Proclus, either from his commentary on the *Enneads* (cf. P. Henry, *Les États du Texte de Plotin* [Brussels 1938], 220, 284) or from a commentary on the *Phaedo*. This must not be taken to mean, however, that the material preserved by Proclus is not genuinely Plotinian.

19 For the influence of this group of thinkers in detail see P. Henry, Introduction to MacKenna's *Enneads*[3] (London 1962), l–lxiii; *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 3–61, 193–241, 391–425; W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin 1930); R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge 1937); J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 56, 187–8. For Neopythagoreanism, cf. E. R. Dodds, 'The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origins of the Neoplatonic One', *CQ* 22 (1928), 129–43 and J. M. Rist, 'The Neoplatonic One and Plato's *Parmenides*', *TAPA* 93 (1962), 389–401.

20 P. Henry, 'Une Comparaison chez Aristote, Alexandre et Plotin', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 429–49.

21 *V.P.* 14.

22 Cf. *Met.* 1049 b ff.

23 Cf. pp. 21–37 above.

24 Cf. Henry–Schwyzer's *Enneads* (ed. maior), 2, p. 73.

25 *Cat.* 15 a 4; *Top.* 121 a 12.

26 P. Hadot, 'Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 140. I am still suspicious (as I was in my review of *Entretiens Hardt* 5 in *Phoenix* 15 [1961], 118) of Hadot's view that Plotinus is much influenced by Stoicism here. There can be no real priority of power over actuality in a pantheistic world.

27 E.g. for Albinus, see *Didaskalikos* 10 (Louis).

28 6.9.6.12–15. Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Theos and the One in some Texts of Plotinus', *Mediaeval Studies* 24 (1962), 169–70.

29 Cf. for example *Enn.* 5.5.

30 5.3.12; 6.7.37; 6.7.40.

31 On the general subject of the Dyad in Plotinus see J. M. Rist, 'The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 12 (1962), 99–107.

32 Cf. the survey of the problem to be found in W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*[2] (Oxford 1953), 176–205. Of course H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, 1 (Baltimore 1944), thinks that the whole of Aristotle's account of this 'later' theory of Idea-Numbers is based on misinterpretations of the dialogues. Although this frees us of the worry of interpreting Aristotle's account of the matter independently, it does so only at the price of making Aristotle a complete fool—a view which I cannot bring myself to accept.

33 The Dyad is spoken of as a material principle at (e.g.) *Met.* 987 b 21, but there is nothing in the *Metaphysics* comparable with Plotinus' elaborate account of the Matter of the Intelligible World in 2.4.3 ff. For an account of how this Aristotelian Intelligible Matter reached Plotinus, see P. Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*[2] (The Hague 1960), 125–6. Merlan's view that Intelligible Matter is hardly compatible with Plotinus' system, however, should be corrected.

34 Cf. 3.7.1; 5.8.4; 6.2.22; 6.4.16.

35 Cf. 4.8.4.35.

36 *Contra Academicos* 3.18.

37 W. Theiler, 'Plotin zwischen Plato und Stoa', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 67.

38 J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964).

39 P. Henry, Introduction to MacKenna's *Enneads*[3] (London 1962), xli–xliv.

40 5.7; 5.9.12. Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Forms of Individuals in Plotinus', *CQ*, n.s. 13 (1963), 223–31.

41 A. H. Armstrong, 'Platonic *Eros* and Christian *Agape*', *DR* (1961), 112.

42 Cf. 1.6.1.37–40.

43 Cf. Cicero, *Orator* 2, 8–9, Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 6.19.2.

44 This grounding of the artist's imagination in the Ideal World is what distinguishes Plotinus from his predecessors. For this and the whole subject of Plotinus' recognition of different forms of artistic achievement depending on 'models' of different levels of reality, see A. N. M. Rich, 'Plotinus and the Theory of Artistic Imitation', *Mnemosyne*, s. 4, 13 (1960), 233–9.

45 *V.P.* 23.

46 *Rep.* 595 C.

47 *N.E.* 1096a 16.

14 A COMMON METAPHOR

1 *Commentary on the Alcibiades* 138.16–18, p. 63 Westerink.

2 ἀνιοῦσιν οὖν ἡμῖν. Cf. Plotinus' ἀναβαίνουσι πρὸς τὸ ἄνω...τοῖς ἀνιοῦσι.

3 *Athen.* 11.507 D. For the pre-Plotinian background to the notion of stripping off tunics in general, see P. Wendland, 'Das Gewand der Eitelkeit', *Hermes* 51 (1916), 481–5.

4 Cf. Empedocles, fr. 126 (DK); Plato, *Alc. I* 132A; E. R. Dodds, *Elements of Theology*[2] (Oxford 1963), 307.
5 *Leg. Alleg.* 2.56–9.
6 *Commentary on the Alcibiades* 180.1–2, p. 83 Westerink.
7 *Commentary on the Cratylus* 155.4–5, p. 88 Pasquali; W. Kroll, *De Oraculis Chaldaicis* (reprint Hildesheim 1962), 52.
8 H. Lewy, *The Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo 1956).
9 *De Mal. Subst.* 24, pp. 203.29–204.1 Boese.
10 Psellus, *De omnifaria doctrina* 197.10–13, p. 97 Westerink.
11 E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.* 307, n. 2, with the references there given.
12 Cf. 3.6.5.29.
13 *De Abst.* 1.31, 2.46.
14 Cf. E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.* 308.
15 Cf. 6.9.11.
16 E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.* 319.
17 L. J. Rosán, *The Philosophy of Proclus* (N.Y. 1949), 213.
18 *Chal. Phil.* 1; *Plat. Theol.* 61–3, 193 Portus.
19 Cf. L. J. Rosán, *op. cit.* 215.
20 Cf. *Rep.* 511D and pp. 231–246 of this book.
21 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism', *Hermes* 92 (1964), 213–25.
22 *V. Procli* 28.
23 *V.P.* 23.
24 See pp. 56–7 above.
25 *V.P.* 23.
26 Cf. *Rep.* 517b 4–5.
27 For a defence of this translation of ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν ἑμαυτὸν ἱδρύσας see p. 56 above. It is significant that Ambrose, *de Isaac* 4.11 (*CSEL* 32, p. 650, 16ff.), also assumes that the passage refers to mystical union with God when he writes 'Ea quae sunt intelligibilia supergressa in eo confirmatur atque eo pascitur'.
28 See p. 56 above.
29 6.9.4.15ff.
30 Contrast the καταβατέον οὖν ἐν μέρει of *Rep.* 520C1.
31 P. Henry, Introduction to MacKenna-Page's *Enneads*[3] (London 1962), lxviii.
32 For a sane account of what we know of this important but shadowy figure see A. D. Nock, 'Posidonius', *JRS* 49 (1959), 1–15.
33 Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 187–8.

15 PRAYER

1 Cf. for example recently W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 1 (Cambridge 1962), 24.
2 It should be remembered that for the ancients 'atheism' meant not so much a denial of the existence of the Gods as a denial of Providence. Hence the Epicureans (and sometimes the Peripatetics)

could properly be called 'atheists'. See the discussion of the varieties of atheism in *Laws* X.

3 ἄξια εὐχῆς, Isoc. 4.182.

4 *Rep.* 450D, 456B12, 499C4, 540D; cf. *Soph.* 249D; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1260b29, 1288b23, 1295a29.

5 *Theages* 126A. For a discussion of the authorship of this work—it is certainly not by Plato—see J. M. Rist, 'Plotinus and the *Daimonion* of Socrates', *Phoenix* 17 (1963), 18.

6 At 4.4.43.12 the *daimones* are allowed memory and sensation (αἴσθησις), though, since Plotinus is specifically speaking of their irrational aspect, we should still assume that whatever effects they bring about as the result of our prayers (or magic) these are not the result of any intention or reasoned decision.

7 We can derive little help from the similar passage at 4.9.4.6: λέγωμεν οὖν θεὸν συλλήπτορα ἡμῖν γενέσθαι παρακαλέσαντες. It is impossible to be sure in this context what 'God' is under discussion. And it might be a merely conventional appeal.

8 Cf. *Phaedo* 100Dff.

9 Cf. J. M. Rist: 'Plotinus and the *Daimonion* of Socrates', *Phoenix* 17 (1963), 13–15, 22–4.

10 A. H. Armstrong, 'Was Plotinus a Magician?', *Phronesis* 1 (1955–6), 77.

11 The phrase μόνος πρὸς μόνον (or some similar expression) occurs elsewhere in the *Enneads* always in connection with union with the One (1.6.7.9; 6.7.34.7; 6.9.11.50). For a discussion of the fact that this phrase was by the time of Plotinus a philosophical commonplace see E. Peterson, 'Herkunft und Bedeutung der ΜΟΝΟΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΜΟΝΟΝ-Formel bei Plotin', *Philologus* 88 (1933), 30–41, and E. R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 16–17. Nevertheless although the phrase was widely used, *Symposium* 217B could have had a special significance to the Platonists.

12 Philo uses the phrase λόγος γεγωνός (which is not to be found in von Arnim's *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*) as an equivalent for the λόγος προφορικός of Stoicism at *De Moise* 2.127 and in many other places (cf. J. Leisegang's *index* to Philo [Berlin 1902], *s.v.* λόγος 1.12). The Stoic λόγος προφορικός, as distinct from λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, refers to words uttered as distinct from thoughts kept in the mind. Philo, however, in the *De Moise* refers ἐνδιάθετος to the immaterial Ideas and προφορικός – γεγωνός to the visible world. This is an adaptation which might have been acceptable to Plotinus, had he known of it (see above, pp. 84–102). That Plotinus was aware of the ἐνδιάθετος–προφορικός distinction is clear from 1.2.3.27ff. and 5.1.3.7, though he does not refer λόγος ἐνδιάθετος to the Intelligible World of Νοῦς. Cf. M. Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der Griechischen Philosophie* (Oldenburg 1872), 317 and A. Aall, *Geschichte der Logos-idee in der Griechischen Philosophie* (Leipzig 1896), 198.

13 Cf. V. Cilento, 'Mito e Poesia nelle Enneadi di Plotino', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 271.
14 W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin 1930), 134. For polemic against the Stoic attitude see Origen, *On Psalms* 114.2 (*GCS* 13, p. 55 Lomm): 'God inclines to us, not we to Him.'
15 E. Peterson, *op. cit.* 31–2.
16 5.5.8.3–5.
17 Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 86.

16 MYSTICISM

1 Cf. B. Mariën's bibliography of Plotinus (nos. 799–888) in V. Cilento's *Enneadi*, 3^2 (Bari 1949). Even this is by no means complete.
2 This appears to be the intention of J. Katz in *Plotinus' Search for the Good* (N.Y. 1950).
3 W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism* (London 1899), 98.
4 R. C. Zaehner, *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* (Oxford 1957), reprinted as a paperback, 1961.
5 Of the works on Plotinus' mysticism alluded to above, the excellent and pioneering *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin* (Paris 1921) should be excluded from the general condemnation. My debt to this work will not be limited to those sections explicitly mentioned here.
6 J. Maréchal, *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques* (Brussels 1937), 296. Perhaps the most ardent exponent of a pantheistic Plotinus is M. de Corte in 'L'Expérience mystique chez Plotin et chez Saint Jean de la Croix', *EC* 20 (1935), 164–215. De Corte's view is adequately disposed of by M. Burque, 'Un problème plotinien: l'identification de l'âme avec l'Un dans la contemplation', *RUO* (sect. spéc.) 9 (1940), 141–76. Burque's view, which is perhaps a modification of the early Inge, is that Plotinus aims only at vision, not at mystical oneness. This is Platonic, not Plotinian.
7 E. Bréhier (trans. J. Thomas), *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (Chicago 1958), 106–31. It is so obvious that Plotinian mysticism is not a complete isolation of the soul (like that practised by the adherents of the Sāmkhya-Yoga) that this variety of mysticism need not be discussed here.
8 1.6.7.1 ff.; 1.6.7.5; 1.6.9.3–4; 3.8.8.1; 4.4.5.11; 5.1.3.3; 6.9.11.11, etc. In 5.2.1.1 it is explained in what sense the One *is* all things, namely transcendently, as their cause.
9 4.8.1.1.
10 6.9.7.32–3.
11 1.6.8.16; 6.9.7.33; 6.9.9.
12 Cf. R. Arnou, *op. cit.* 156–60.
13 R. Arnou, *op. cit.* 162–74. Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 80–1.
14 1.6.8.26; 6.5.1.3; 6.9.4.28; 6.9.7.29–30.

15 5.1.7.9; 5.3.15.33; 5.4.2.38; 3.8.10.1. Cf. 6.9.2.45.
16 Cf. 1.2.
17 2.9.15.38–40.
18 Cf. especially R. Arnou, *op. cit.*, J. Trouillard, *La Purification plotinienne* (Paris 1955), J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 87–98.
19 1.2.1.4; 1.2.3.5–6; 1.6.6.19–20; 2.9.9.50–1; 6.7.34.6; 6.7.35.44.
20 2.9.1.2; 3.8.9.17; 5.4.1.5; 6.9.6 *passim*; 6.9.11.24, etc.
21 5.3.17.38.
22 Cf. 6.7.34.4.
23 5.3.13.1.
24 6.9.10.20.
25 K. Joel, *Geschichte der antiken Philosophie* (Tübingen 1921), 364; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* I (Cambridge 1962), 230.
26 Cf. R. Arnou, 'La séparation par simple altérité dans la "Trinité" plotinienne', *Gregorianum* II (1930), 181–93.
27 5.3.11.17.
28 5.1.3.21–2.
29 5.1.6.52–3.
30 Cf. the references to 2.9.16, 4.3.9, 6.4.14 given by Arnou, *Le Désir*, 171.
31 5.5.4.8.
32 For the importance of these notions in understanding the One itself see the discussion of the One's knowledge on pp. 38–52 above.
33 Cf. 6.9.4.27; 6.9.7.
34 Cf. 4.8.1.5.
35 R. Arnou, *Le Désir*, 248.
36 *V.P.* 23.
37 Cf. 1.6.7.39; 4.8.1.3; 5.3.17.34; 5 5.3.4; 5.5.4.7; 6.7.35.7; 6.9.10.20; 6.9.11.31, etc.
38 Cf. P. Henry's Introduction to MacKenna's *Enneads*[3] (London 1962), lxviii.
39 συγκερασθῆναι, 1.6.7.13; συγκρῖναι θέλοντες, 6.7.34.15.
40 R. Arnou, *Le Désir*, 246.
41 Cf. 5.5.8.12. 42 P. Henry, *op. cit.* lxix.
43 The crest of the wave is the νοῦς ἐρῶν of 6.7.35. Cf. 5.5.8.22 (τῷ ἑαυτοῦ μὴ νῷ), 6.9.7.27–8, 5.3.14.14, 5.3.6.39.
44 P. Aubin, 'L'Image dans l'œuvre de Plotin', *RSR* 41 (1953), 376. There are two passages in the *Enneads* which at first sight might seem to suggest a 'special' ἐπιστροφή or turning of the One at least towards itself. These are 5.1.6.16–19 (μὴ ὄντος δὲ ἐκείνῳ μηδενὸς μὴ τιθώμεθα αὐτὸ κινεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' εἴ τι μετ' αὐτὸ γίνεται, ἐπιστραφέντος ἀεὶ ἐκείνου πρὸς αὐτὸ [αὐτὸ, Harder] ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι γεγονέναι) and 5.1.7.5 (ἢ ὅτι τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ [αὐτὸ, Harder] ἑώρα). In the second of these passages the subject of ἑώρα may be νοῦς, and the pronoun αὐτό—so Henry–Schwyzer, Cilento and K.-H.

Volkmann-Schluck (*Plotin als Interpret der Ontologie Platos* [Frankfurt 1941])—though the objections of Harder and P. Hadot (review of Henry–Schwyzer 2 in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 164 [1963], 95) are probably valid. In the first passage, however, Henry–Schwyzer's view, supported by Cilento, that ἐκείνου does not refer to the One, seems impossible. If we read ἐπιστραφέντος ἀεὶ ἐκείνου πρὸς αὐτό, therefore, Plotinus may be referring to the fact that the One is always 'turned towards', or as he usually says, 'present with' its products. Then the participle would not carry the sense of movement in time but would describe a state of affairs. If however we read with Harder πρὸς αὐτό there is ἐπιστροφή of the One to itself, though again the participle must not be taken temporally. I prefer the second position, which would make ἐπιστραφέντος a strong contrast to κινεῖσθαι, and find myself in agreement with Hadot (see above, p. 92).

45 5.1.11.7–15. 46 6.9.8.20; 6.9.10.17.
47 1.6.7.9; 5.1.6.11; 6.7.34.7; 6.9.11.50.
48 R. C. Zaehner, *op. cit.* 157–8.
49 R. Arnou, *Le Désir*, 246.
50 Cf. καθορῶν ἄπειρον αὐτόν, 5.8.4.33.
51 1.6.7.12. Cf. 6.7.22; 6.7.34; 6.7.35.
52 Cf. 5.8.10.33; 6.7.35. 53 1.6.7.14.
54 6.7.22. Cf. J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964), 96–9.
55 E. Bréhier, *op. cit.* 131. Cf. O. Lacombe, 'Note sur Plotin et la pensée indienne', *Annuaire de l'École pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences religieuses* (1950–1).
56 According to some, though by no means all, interpreters of Indian thought, there are a very few traces of theistic doctrines in the Upanishads. In general, however, specifically theistic ideas are developed only in the later Bhagavad-Gītā and in commentators such as Rāmānuja. Cf. R. C. Zaehner, *At Sundry Times* (London 1958), 106–33.
57 2.9.2; 4.3.12; 5.1.10; 6.7.5. 58 Cf. 1.4.10.
59 Cf. the problem of consciousness and self-consciousness in 3.9.9, 4.4.4, 5.3.4, 5.8.11, 6.9.3, 6.9.7 and H. R. Schwyzer, 'Bewusst und Unbewusst bei Plotin', *Entretiens Hardt* 5 (Geneva 1960), 343–90.
60 1.1.12; 4.7.14; 6.4.16. 61 6.9.11.15–16; 6.9.8.22, 43.
62 6.7.35.33–4.

17 NEOPLATONIC FAITH

1 See the list of scholars and views to be found in H. Lewy, *The Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo 1956), 144.
2 H. Lewy, *ibid.* 144.
3 L. J. Rosán, *The Philosophy of Proclus* (N.Y. 1949), 215, n. 152.
4 A. H. Armstrong, 'Platonic *Eros* and Christian *Agape*', *DR* (1961), 116, n. 15.

5 Cf. Bonitz's *Index*.
6 R. Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (Oxford 1949), 50.
7 R. Walzer, *ibid.* 55. 8 R. Walzer, *ibid.* 48.
9 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.75.
10 R. Walzer, *op. cit.* 14 and cf. 51, n. 3. *De pulsuum differentiis* 2.4.
11 Henry–Schwyzer are certainly right to restore the normal MS reading here against the κεκραμένης of S (where the letters τη are omitted at the end of a line) and all editors since Creuzer. See Henry–Schwyzer *ad loc.*
12 See above, pp. 199–212.
13 *Ad Marc.* 23, p. 288 Nauck.
14 Cf. *Enn.* 2.9.15.39–40 and W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin 1930), 107.
15 For the text δίχα τοῦ ὀρθῶς ⟨τιμᾶν⟩ see W. Theiler, *op. cit.* 148, n. 4. Orelli and Nauck read ⟨ζῆν⟩.
16 *Enn.* 3.2.9.10.
17 The phrase is Armstrong's.
18 *P.E.* 1.1 (trans. E. H. Gifford).
19 *Apol.* 38A. 20 4.7.15.
21 H. Lewy, *op. cit.* 144–5.
22 A. H. Armstrong, *op. cit.* 116, n. 5.
23 Cf. E. R. Dodds, 'The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origins of the Neoplatonic One', *CQ* 22 (1928), 143.
24 H. Lewy, *op. cit.* 145.
25 *Comm. on Physics* 5.19 Diels.
26 H. Lewy, *op. cit.* 145, n. (f).
27 *Comm. on De Caelo* 55 Heiberg.
28 What follows is a paraphrase.
29 *Comm. on Alc.* 51–3, p. 23 Westerink; W. Kroll, *De Orac. Chal.* (reprint Hildesheim 1962), 26; H. Lewy, *op. cit.* 144–5.
30 The reference to Plato is repeated at 193.53ff.
31 *Comm. on Alc.* 53, p. 23 Westerink.
32 *Ibid.* 51.
33 *Comm. on Tim.* 1.212.22ff. Diehl.
34 *P.T.* 61, 40–2. 35 *Ibid.* 62, 5–6.
36 *Comm. on Rep.* 1, p. 185, 27ff. Kroll.
37 For a general account of Proclus' views on theurgy see Rosán, *op. cit.* 213–15, and C. Zintzen, 'Mystik und Magie in der neuplatonischen Philosophie', *Rh. Mus.* 108 (1965), 93–100.
38 *Ibid.* 96. 39 *Ibid.* 213.
40 *Ibid.* 215. 41 *Pace* R. Walzer, *op. cit.* 55.
42 Cf. J. M. Rist, 'Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism', *Hermes* 92 (1964), 213–25.
43 For a discussion of the identity of ps.-Dionysius see J. M. Rist, 'In Search of the Divine Denis', *The Seed of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Professor T. J. Meek* (Toronto 1964), 118–39.
44 *Divine Names* 2.9 (*PG* 3, 647B).

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